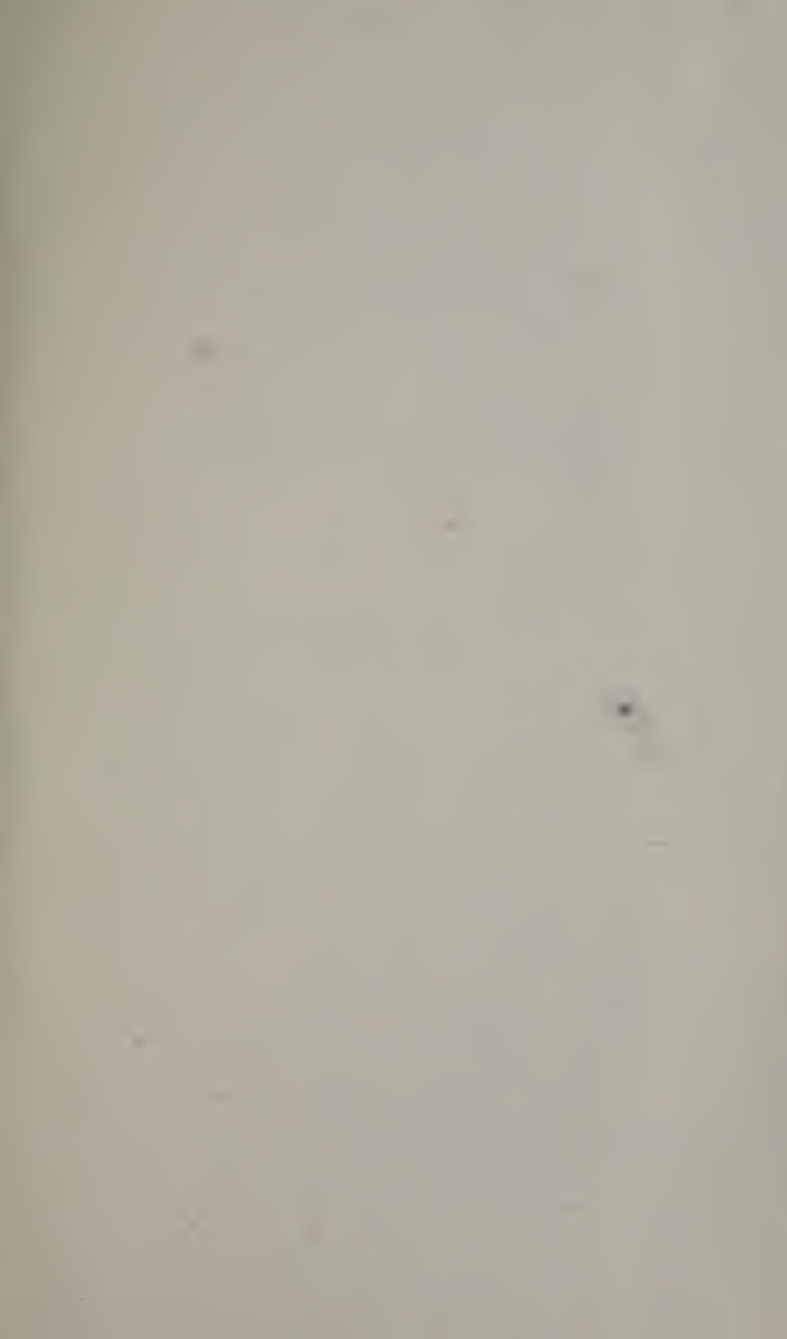




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THE
MOUNTAIN
DECAMERON.

BY JOSEPH DOWNES.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE MOUNTAIN-DECAMERON.

THE HERMIT VICAR.

CHAPTER I.

“Welcome the Creation’s guest,
Lord of Earth and Heaven’s heir!

* * * * *

If thou be ’st with perfumes pleased,
Thou in fragrant clouds shalt show
Like another God below!”

ANDREW MARVELL.

“It’s a base forgetfulness for Man to forget that he is
Man.”—FROM DREXILIUS, ON DEATH.

THE sun making “a golden set” shone full into the small though best parlour of the Goat Inn, in the village of ———, Merionethshire, and as the long level beams struggled and straggled through the dense fog of tobacco exhalations, they shewed the portly figure of David Rowlands, Esquire, Justice of the Peace for the county, brother to Sir E. Rowlands, Baronet, proprietor of large estates, &c. &c., and owner of a very beautiful mansion, on an eminence overlooking that small and very in-

tellectual village, fast asleep before a lighted candle of prodigiously long snuff, and a small round table much irrigated by streams of half-dried ale, spilt long since; the ashes of half-burnt pipe-papers; and at his feet, two of those delicate articles of furniture called "spittoons, one for himself, one for his host, the landlord, with whom he had been killing time, and steeping the senses in the soft incense of that agreeable perfume, for which he for some hours had exchanged that of the summer hedges and flowers out of doors.

Mr. Rowlands, suddenly waking, rubbed his eyes, tottered to the door with the step of seventy years, and the handsome though bloated countenance of middle age, and stood calling drowsily, "Parson! Mr. Trevor! I say parson, where the d——l be you?" A very fair girl with eyes of "blue languish" appeared, opening an opposite parlour door. Behind, looking over her shoulder, the handsome face of a middle-aged clergyman was seen, dark and expressive of deep thought as well as pensiveness, marking a recluse scholar, but one of the imaginative kind, rather than a college pedant. "Hester, my love," asked the Squire, "where's your tutor? Oh he's there! Do pray, your Reverence, take my girl here a walk before the sun is quite down, out of this hot

house. I dropped asleep some how. Or suppose you return home with her? for landlord and I are going to settle accompts; but come and drink, Mr. Trevor, drink! for the weather's warm." The tutor bowed and raised the squire's own tankard (*secundum morem Cambriæ*) to his lips, demurred, coloured, and setting it down, said "I am not at all thirsty, Sir, I thank you." The good-humoured patron laughed out heartily, "No cheating you into what's good for you I see, Mr. Trevor," (the Tutor had perceived by the smell, it was clear brandy which the Squire was drinking, and thinking the latter had not designed he should know it, but invited him in forgetfulness, felt confused at declining), "My stars! never saw such a thing in a clergyman! not in my country at least; but we'll have in some cwrww directly. Yes, yes! ring the bell, Hester; for my part, my stomach is too weak for such raking stuff."

"Excuse us, excuse me, Sir—I've got—*we* are drinking tea in the next room."

"Ha, ha, ha! *tea*, with the womankind, hey, Parson? But you're my poor girl's best friend always, faith! she was wanting her tea before I went to sleep. Nay, now do drink one gulp of my liquor, just to correct that poison-slop of tea, it will kill your nerves, 'pon my soul.

The air comes nice and fresh in," continued the Squire, just thrusting his head out into the golden calm and balm of a glorious summer evening, and turning in again to his fetid cell of dense cloud with its dingy candle, "L—d! there was a time I should have liked to have seen my girl home myself, this fine evening, and I'm not so much older than you neither!" A deep flush mantled to the cheek of the priest, where youth had long yielded up the last vestige of fresh beauty to growing years, and more to the withering effect of habits of deep thought. "Go finish tea, my child, and come for a kiss before you leave the house. You'll not want for a father, and a tender one, poor wench! though I should be snatched off by an apoplexy; will she, old friend?" As the tutor was following his pupil across the passage to their tea-drinking—"Halloo, Sir, halloo," Mr. Rowlands cried out, "talking of fathers and seeing her home put it in my head—my head's worth nothing now!—she'll have a *husband* to see her home, aye, and to bed too, eh, Parson? very soon, now: so want neither of us old fellows. I've just taken at the post office a letter from the Baronet; nephew Ned's on his voyage home, tell her so; grown a very fine fellow, tell her so; much handsomer than when they were spliced by promise, mere

children, by the Baronet and me, before Ned went abroad. How he can reward *you*, Sir, for that heart and that mind you have reared and preserved so pure and beautiful, to charm his eyes and crown his hope on his return, I know not," said Mr. Rowlands; suddenly resuming for a minute, under real depth of feeling, that grace and soft urbanity of manners, long merged in the gross habits of intemperance, and the vulgar associations induced thereby, and bowing lowly and gracefully while he spoke. "I trust at least that neither my brother nor he will ever forget the obligation! *repay* it they never can, Mr. Trevor! so now for old Boniface. Good night, and God bless you, Sir! take care of her, and draw her shawl over her shoulders when the mists begin to be chilly."

Neither of the parties had observed, till now, the face of the fair young creature waiting for her tutor's company, which was hastily thrust within the room again, at the mention of the letter and nephew Ned. Nor did Mr. Trevor now (while somewhat embarrassed under emotion, produced by the father's sudden outbreak of the gentleman and the grateful father) perceive the strong expression of that very girlish face; how the eyes seemed to roll and dilate

in a sort of wildness, while the extreme fairness of her complexion whitened into an alabaster paleness, extending to her very lips, quickly followed by a blush, that at once mantled over her whole cheeks, and down to her beautiful neck, as if become conscious of the emotion she too visibly betrayed. Miss Rowlands withdrew quickly and silently again, Mr. Trevor followed into the other room, and her father rung for the publican, his tenant.

“Well now, Jacky the Goat,” (this is a common mode of addressing persons in Wales, by making their domicile an adjunct of their names) “well, Boniface,” said Mr. Rowlands, “the *third* rent-day’s gone over, Johnny, suppose we settle?”

“I humbly thank your worship,” replied the host.

“Thank *me*! that’s turning tables, my friend! It’s *I* am to thank you: pay and thank too’s not fair! Bad times you see, or else I’d see you d——d before I’d speak the first word about payment, but every body is wanting money.”

“That’s true your honour! and *I* do want it too, bad enough.”

“When one’s drove for cash, one *must* turn *dun*.”

“*Dun* ? The Lord forbid that, Sir ! a fellow like I, to *dun* your worship, that’s a great gentleman ! To be sure ‘Needs must when the devil drives,’ as the proverb is.” The Squire looked puzzled.

“I’m talking of rents, Jacky, *my rent* ! I say these are such hard times that they make every body think of the pocket.”

“I wish all my creditors would have the same thought for a poor publican as your worship. I thank your goodness.”

“How the devil ? What is all this ? Why, man, it’s goodness to myself ! I’m as poor as a rat, John *bach*.”

“Sorry for it, Sir, can’t be helped, we must settle another day.”

“By G—d,” exclaimed the Squire, thumping the table in perplexed vexation, “hang me if I know how we’re talking, or what ! Comical logic this, of thine, John the Goat ! because I’m as poor as a rat, you’ll not *vex* me with my money ! you’re quite agreeable to the great accommodation I shall find in your postponing payment *sine die* ! Zounds, whet thy whistle and wit, man, if hast any, with a sup of brandy, and, name of G—d ! let’s begin the talk all over again !”

“Thank your worship, and here’s your very good health!”

“Now, hark you, John! I’ve got mortgages to be paid off, my poor dear girl to be new rigged, portioned off and all, for her cousin Ned,—gay dog! and his father, my brother, a prim old courtier,—you see, great expense!—So you see, for these here reasons—”

“I’m sure I couldn’t lay it down half so clear and beautiful as you does, not for the life on me!” said the host.

“Now *do* hold your tongue! we begin to see into one another now, if you’ll be quiet. Those, you see, are the *reasons* for the thing: *don’t* you perceive? Drink! The thing itself is, the thing, to wit, now mark and digest: I, David Rowlands of Llysdinam, Esquire, want my rent, due God knows how long, from you, John the Goat, to me the said D. Rowlands aforesaid, for this here inn and tenements, and brewhouse and beasthouse, be the same more or less, situate in this here town of—”

“Clear as a printed book!”

“*Can* you be quiet now, *till* I’ve done? Well—and so—egad! I believe I *have* done, though *now* you understand,—down with the chink, John! and, d’ye hear? along with the chink bring another glass, *nearly neat*,—and,

ho ! John, bring *my* little score with you, for odd glasses and pipes, and my dinners o' Bench days, along with the money,—and, John, let it be *quite* neat !”

The easy Welsh Squire unconsciously, in his last words, touched the clue that was to unravel the perplexed onset of their dialogue.

The modest landlord returned, not with a bag of guineas (for as yet guineas were not extinct), but a large goblet of brandy, and a very ill-written document, fold within fold, which he presented with a low bow, and the whispered words, “*My little* accompt, Sir.” It was a bill for “sundry refreshments,” dinners, &c. which the Squire’s journeys from his mansion (distant a mile) rendered necessary. This interminable list of “carried forwards,” and “brought ups,” not only covered Mr. Rowland’s demand for rent, but made “mine host” his creditor to some considerable amount.*

David Rowlands, Esquire, was descended from an ancient family of good fame in the Principality. He was at this period forty-seven years of age, but a fatal habit of inebriety had superannuated him ere his time, dropsied his frame, vulgarised his manners, and made him almost a stranger in his own home, and

* A Brecknockshire *fact*.

to that daughter, an only child, whom he yet loved with all the feelings which *alcohol* had left alive within him. He had been long a widower, and too conscious of his own unfitness for the parental charge, had engaged the clergyman we have seen, not only to instruct her, but supply his own place, as a guardian friend. Mr. Trevor being then upwards of thirty-eight years of age, appeared to him not objectionable on the score of age: but vast indeed was the real difference between the two, the father and the foster-father, as Mr. Trevor might almost be designated; between the victim of intemperance and the happy votary of virtuous moderation. This was most striking on one occasion; the most painful of the priest's duties (for his tender regard for his patron made it a self-imposed duty to him), that of going forth at day-dawn to meet the Squire returning after a night's excess, to stretch his enfeebled frame, sick and stupefied, in his delightful, despised home of Llysdinam, as if in an hospital, there to do penance, till that forced abstinence should give a respite to harassed nature, and thus allow his return to his *real* home, an alehouse (for the Goat was hardly an inn), to renew the suicidal drench, and repeat that loathsome penance, till death (scarcely more hideous and not a more mournful inflict-

tion than that daily death of his rationality) should interpose to close the poor and soul-debasing scene.

Then it was that upholding by the arm, the man, his benefactor and friend, whom he saw blest with all the gifts of Providence in vain, often receiving with patience much rudeness (for which he was sure to meet next day the humblest apology), the fine philosophical spirit, joined to melancholy, which made Mr. Trevor somewhat of a misanthrope, wrought so in him, that he would burst into tears at the sad picture before him of self-degraded man.

Then, indeed, in the glorious landscape around, and the paralytic talk, and tottering limbs, and soulless eyes of its wealthiest tenant and possessor, he could not but feel that

“ All but the spirit of man was divine ! ”

There was the mild glory of a level sun, sleeping along meadows, steaming with blue mists, and little prisms flashing in his own refreshed eye, that drank in a sober rapture from all objects, from that sun to the least blade of grass that the dew turned into a string of diamonds. There was the exquisite charm of that early hour, the night's own deep stillness with that serene illumination, a sort of beautified night,

lingering beneath the already opened eye of day, drawing forth all delicious odours round their walk, making the lambs washed in the night-dew shine like moving snow, and a hundred insignificant beings, that were to die and be no more—the proud-crowing cock, the triumphing lark with his hymn, the poor fugitive hare, the very beetles that glimpsed emerald and gold through the grass, and the merry grasshoppers, all with small voice—making the very ground murmur music, all happy, all active, all manifestly greeting, in their several modes, glorious Morning, the daily miracle, wrought in the resurrection of a hemisphere from the grave of Night! “And here,” Mr. Trevor inly said, “here dreams and babbles along,—here turns his dying eye (like an exhausted lamp), turns from that sun’s flash down upon the earth—Man! behold him in his grandeur,—*here* he is! Not this majestic river, with all those headlong pictures of mountains along its shores; not those mountains themselves, robed in the purple of the flowering heath; nor this sea, nor that ocean, can compare with this God-favoured pride of the earth, this miracle of flesh, if we reflect on the mighty mind which almost deifies that flesh; yet will this blest creature kill this blessed

mind, daily! this proud king of life, not only lower himself beneath the meanest thing that lives, but court a living death! Has *this* poor man *life* now? If so, 'tis but the life of a tree to himself, of the loathsome beast to others, even to *me* his friend. Alas, my friend! alas, my benefactor!" Thus mourned in thought Mr. Trevor, while his half-angry, half-sleeping companion tottered, growling along, leaning heavily on his upholding arm. Sometimes his thoughts reverted suddenly to himself. "And *I* who now believe my soul not dead to this charming scene," he would reflect, "*I* who seem to open wide the little casement of reason to this light, so like God's own smile, *I* so loftily pitying my dark brother here; am *I* not even as he, *man*? How soon may some *moral* drunkenness, direr even than his, palsy this self-complacent soul! How soon may some stormy gust shut violently and everlastingly the gate of mind, all access of joy through the senses; close for ever, that pleasant inlet of such sublime enjoyment, shut out all this glory, blast this bloom, poison this sweetness of nature literally in some life-loathing remorse, some despair, or the black madness of a guilty melancholy!"

It was not only a vague impulse of melan-

choly, that hurried the tutor into this train of reflection, with its dark transition to his own fate, as he led his degraded friend on his way homeward,—a way not surpassed in soft sublimity by any in the Principality, being that succession of meadow, turf hills, and crag and wild woods with green paths winding, which follows the beautiful river Mawddach, under the mountain Cader Idris, whence those sea-river and mountain prospects apostrophized by the tutor, present new charms at every step. Possibly Mr. Trevor was at that moment half conscious of another sort of intoxication, less gross, not less ominous of evil, perhaps, than that of his patron, stealing over his *own* proud, clear, and conscientious mind, the intoxication of the heart. To explain this, a retrospect of the past five years of his life is necessary.

CHAPTER II.

His hungry eyes upon her face he fed,
And feeding them so pined himself away,
While she, declining often down her head,
Wherewith he sighed as if his soul had fled
From his frail breast to her's.

FAIRFAX'S TASSO.

THE foregoing sketch of a Welsh Squire of a former day presents a character not very hard to be found in Wales in the present; men born to every advantage of fortune, forfeiting all for the lowest of human gratifications; worse than verifying the scriptural instance of infatuated folly, selling their birth-right for—not a mess of pottage—but of poison; men attracted down by that poor enjoyment, from their own sphere into that of the unintellectual vulgar, within which all distinctions of birth are lost.

Sir Edward Rowlands, the brother of our Squire, was a courtly character, but not less a victim to another fatal passion, that of gaming. His own reduced fortune made the acquisition of his brother's, through his only daughter, a point of eager policy with him, for he perceived the tendency of his brother's habits to an early death, besides that a large portion was to ac-

company the hand of Miss Rowlands, even during her father's life, should she marry prior to his decease. Sir Edward took care that his son and impoverished heir should be the play-fellow during the holidays, of Hester Rowlands. The easy father saw no objection to the union of their children, but was scarcely quick-minded enough to see the immense importance of that union to his gay and dissipated brother. So when that childish intercourse had pretty firmly engaged their young fancies to each other, he proposed, as his son who was some few years older than she, was going on his travels, that as solemn an engagement as her tender age yet allowed, should be effected between them. Being already thus playfully attached, their consent was prompt and willing. He departed, and the little girl wept after him, perhaps as long as childhood could be expected to forget its play; but she did not cease, when she ceased weeping, to consider herself the betrothed of "cousin Ned," as she was used to call him. Meanwhile both son and father, but most the last, never ceased by letters to keep alive in her mind as strong a sense of conjugal obligation, as if she had actually visited the altar with him.

The absence of her cousin was prolonged

beyond expectation by various accidents, so that his return had been, at the period of this story's opening, an event of constant expectation for a considerable time.

Mr. Trevor had been engaged almost from the departure of the youth, in the delicate duty of cultivating the mind, and forming the character of a young beauty, then a complete rustic, for the enjoyment of another.

Ardent as was the natural but subdued temperament of the scholar, he entered upon his task fully in the spirit and understanding in which her helpless father entrusted it to him, the true spirit of a foster parent, fond, watchful, yet passionless. The peculiarity of their situation made it fortunate for, perhaps, both parties, that he, though a handsome and elegant man of winning manners, was already somewhat "fallen into the sear leaf," while his pupil, though a soft-voiced, soft-eyed, exquisite promise of a lovely woman, was as yet no more, was a child of not quite fourteen. That peculiarity consisted in the almost constant solitude which many circumstances concurred to keep around them. It could hardly fail to produce a strong mutual tie of feeling of some nature, and it took the paternal and filial, from this marked disparity of years.

Mr. Rowlands, though grown too inactive to follow the fox hounds, still coursed hares or shot, or sat drinking at the Goat all day long, though every morning resolved to give more of his time to his fond daughter. Then he kept a good-looking housekeeper, whose more than equivocal character excluded female society from Llysdirnau. There was too a family of rude children of this woman's, bred partly in the kitchen, partly in the parlour; an anomalous brood called her nephews and nieces, though their place of entrance into the world was no further off than a lone house of a gamekeeper on Mr. Rowlands' own estate. The uncouth familiarity of these helped to drive Miss Rowlands quickly back to her chamber, when she emerged from it in her father's absence.

Mr. Trevor's accession to office rescued her also from some tyranny she suffered from this usurping dame, who viewed her beauty with more than the malignity often falsely imputed to stepmothers. Nor was this rescue without its effect in strengthening the new tie between the forlorn girl and her dignified deliverer.

That protector, with all his years, was scarcely a less worldly being or creature of solitude, than that neglected child. From the seclusion of a college student passionately fond of the

ancient classics, Mr. Trevor stepped at once into a solitude still deeper, that of the ill ordered, unvisited mansion of Llysdyham, only broken by that fairy form, that artless yet precocious and loving child for ever at his side, astonishing him with the rapid execution of every lesson, under the inspiriting excitement of his praise, artlessly holding by his hand as they walked through the rich meadows full of flowers, or breathing close at his ear, with almost touching cheek, as they read in the authors that had been his solitary delight, and now fast becoming her's also, under the tutorship of one who derived thence an added incentive to hastening her progress in polite literature, for his nature was eminently social. Even his brother clergymen, whose company he was now and then favoured with at the Esquire's table, were of a grade not suited to his own intellect or refinement; for Mr. Trevor, though of Welsh extraction, as his name proves, had received a wholly English education.

Their conversation was exclusively engaged with the feats of themselves and their dogs and horses. Mr. Trevor found it insufferable to listen to an hour's hot vociferous debate, on the question which way, due west or north-

west, diagonally or "right across," *through* the hedge or *over* the hedge, the "capital bitch Flora" took, in the "great green-piece," to come up with the hare.

The pedigree of the said bitch, and the fate and fortunes of divers of her hopeful whelps, he found himself unable to follow. Mr. Trevor thought that, whatever excuse for the sports of the field (those reliques of barbarism and the hunger of savage man), may be fairly found in excitement and high health which the heat of the chase produces and ensures, at least it must end with the hunt, and is no longer to be allowed for the vile vapid second edition of the thought-killing affair, in the shape of an oral history of its mighty events, excluding more elegant exercises for intellect. To spend most of the day in killing time and thought, and the remnant of it in showing *how* it was done—thus killing both "o'er again," revolted both the reason, patience, and taste of the thinking student.

A strong feeling of contempt is not easily concealed, even by politeness. If he, in spite of his delicacy, betrayed such a sentiment towards them, as coarse and frivolous, they scarcely wished to conceal their's as strong toward the grave pedagogue, and utter novice in field sports. Hence it happened that, ex-

cept for his ever complacent patron's kind inquiries after the state of stock on his plate, he sat as mute and as complete a cypher at table as his young charge herself, timid and unused to men's company as she was. It was natural that as soon as ever she grew out of the child, which of course was not long after their first acquaintance, Mr. Trevor's eyes should follow her through the door, and his mind feel her departure, which was the signal of release from constraint to the other gentlemen, one for still duller stupidity to himself, until the welcome summons to tea re-united them. Indeed, even in their earliest intercourse, while the breadth of the table divided the master and pupil, looks of pensive communion soon began to be exchanged between his dark man's eye and her gentle one of artless child's blue—"When shall we be at our books again?" those looks seemed to say.

That very childishness which, as remarked before, proved a safeguard from any dangerous passion's growth in the tutor, at that period, had perhaps its own danger as to the chance of such a hopeless entanglement for some future period. First it threw him wholly off his guard, and got within his fence, in the art of parrying the incessant gentle assault on his heart. Secondly, it endeared her to *him* more speedily

than the reserved dignity of a few added years would have done.

So much was she a child of nature, from her want of intercourse with any but her own father, that she was too ready to confound the characters of pupil and daughter, for the excessive delicacy of her tutor. Wearied with her over exertions in study, secretly carried on in the night, through her eagerness for her master's praise, she would be surprised by sleep as they studied together, and her fair face, which had followed his reading with her chin rested on his shoulder, would suddenly softly rest there, turning upon her smooth and faintly pink cheek.

The embarrassed collegian, new to such fullness of filial confidence, would blush, even alone as they were, prepare to remove the pleasant weight—listening to her breathing would delay—eye the library door, fearing observers, as if conscious of something indecorous:—still not find in his heart to wake her! Then the philosopher, the man of pure thoughts and strictest honour, would rise within him, and reproach the grossness of such a delicacy, and ask how he could shrink from being seen in so artless a situation, even by all the world. So he would let her have her nap out, well con-

firmed in his last sentiment, by her utter freedom from all embarrassment on her waking. For then the tired innocent, turning her fair eyes languidly round about, till she knew where she was, at last rested them on his near face, and while she threw back her glossy ringlets, which had fallen forward and mixed with his own black hair, (not, alas ! without a strong admixture of grey) and blushed a little at the entanglement of hers and his—exclaimed, “ Oh dear, I was fancying myself alone in the dark How long did I sleep ? ”

The great (perhaps fatal) want of Miss Rowlands' life at that era, was a mother or a motherly friend. Time glided on ; her fine form began to develope itself. The mind expanded beautiful in the expanding body, and modulated its motions into harmony, and touched it into gentler grace. Like the bud of the rose, which shapes its green sheath into swelling beauty, while it still grows on unseen within, or just peeps out blushing, a mere rosy point—womanhood and half-wakened passion began to be visible, and but visible, in the beautified child, betrayed but by a flying blush, or a deeper sigh than childhood is wont to breathe.

And now came the time when those infant endearments were to cease. The half ludicrous

yet rather painful task devolved on her tutor (through that want of a female guide to her natural modesty) of gently weaning, as it were, her dependent lovingness of nature from that innocent, yet no longer decorous, leaning on himself as her sole companion, of which an instance has been given, so delightful, so dangerous to a lonely-hearted man, secretly pining over his own loveless life's decline, and with a temperament of ardent melancholy. Even the strongest sense, with the purest modesty, will not alone perfect a young girl in the etiquette of modern decorum. Her pretty laughable angers, the reproachful short glooms, and ruffling of a brow like a marbled snow-wreath, under his smiling repulses of her old childish endearments, purely filial as they were, taught her preceptor that only a real father can *happily* act the father's part to a young beauty.

His good-humoured impulse to kiss the pretty pouting lip—to draw back closer than she would have lain it herself to his, the cheek she advanced, in some fit of hilarity, almost to touch his own, and which he had evaded by shrinking from it (so banishing all its dimples in a moment)—his impulse contrary to the action—was so strong, so natural, that Mr. Trevor was conscious of a secret war begun

within him, between nature and custom, feeling and duty. Oh no, it was not between passion and virtue! it could not be! Was he not an enthusiast in honour, in lofty virtue, in the sacredness of faith betwixt man and man? Was he not pledged, committed in all ways to his part, by gratitude to his generous patron—by tenderness to his affianced charge herself—by firmest promise to her uncle—even by the absurdity of any other softer relation, pledged to himself and his manly dignity, to fulfil that single part of a fatherly friend? To bring her forth a glorious flower to the sun of fashion, from that secluded green bank among the mountains—to receive his reward from them and his own heart, and withdraw for ever, to his college or his living, to the loneliness and calm sadness of an unshared life, far gone into decline?

To a vainer bolder man, those her clings to baby blandishments, would have surely seemed the dictates of womanhood instead of what they really were—those of childishness—to his own future mortification and despair. Even to our tutor they were dangerous. They helped to prolong that dream of female sympathy (that sympathy so essential to a mind like his) which that intercourse had sweetly

imposed on his lulled senses, almost as sweet as the reality, but for its short-lived nature, and indeed converted into that reality, as far as intercourse without love between the sexes, can approach to that delicious twin existence betwixt hearts as well as minds.

But Mr. Trevor was any thing rather than a vain man. He might indeed be called the antithesis of a coxcomb. Strong sense, with a rather despondent cast of mind, and diffidence in female society, inclined him to distrust too much, rather than presume upon, his own powers of pleasing. A certain habit of dark looking for of the worst, made him older in his own dark fancy than he actually was. For instance, at thirty-five years of age, he would muse to himself thus: "A few flying years more gone by, and I shall be *forty-five*—life's very nightfall!" And from that moment, the interval overstepped by his strong self-tormenting imagination, our scholar became (in his *impression*) of that very age, in spite of the confuting powers and voice of truth. Despondency had a power yet stronger, and melancholy a deeper voice.

But whence sprung this extreme horror of time's march, and its withering effect on himself? Mr. Trevor would have burned with a

sense of slanderous wrong, inflicted by any one who should have imputed to him a *lover's* feelings towards his pupil—towards that very young girl committed to his care, with a boundless confidence by her relatives. Nor would the imputation have been just; in fact, his sense of duty or honour was so strong as to prompt him to the part of guardian over her mind's strictness of honour, as well as its acquirements, and he failed not to second the uncle's and cousin's care (by letters) to preserve the troth she had plighted, inviolate, with his utmost zeal. His Christian obligation, as well as his parental part, equally demanded this at his hands. And perhaps he grew the more earnest in this watch over her good faith, from a mystery that hung over his pupil's real sentiments on that head.

Perhaps the extreme craft and tact in dissimulation of old age itself, is not so effective in veiling a heart from all eyes, as is nature, quite artless, but guarded by a trembling *modesty*, in the young female new to passion.

Miss Rowlands betrayed lately, or affected to betray, an aversion to his frequent allusions to her husband elect; yet her rapid blush, and the downcast eye that seemed bashfully hiding the new feelings the advent of womanhood was

inspiring, seemed to tell of expectation—emotion—perhaps passion, all awake, and heaving her breast, as evinced by her tucker's rise and fall, and giving a dark thoughtfulness to her eye, only visible then, at the bare mention of her cousin's return.

This inscrutableness of so young a heart, arose from her very artlessness—from her being a rustic, the creation of solitude and Nature, not of Fashion. Making the eventful transit from childhood into womanhood, in the depth of sylvan seclusion, her young mind became mildly illumed, not heated by the advent of the reign of the passions, without the exposures to its scorching influence, which the city maiden of fashion can scarcely wholly escape. Hester Rowlands retained all the charm of the child, the purity of thought, and even the bashful seeming unacquaintance with woman's feelings, even under the full developed form of seventeen, and after the hour of life's day, which made that advent certain, however invisible. Compared with fashionable females of the same age, she might be likened to one of those loveliest small evergreen dingles so frequent in her native country, which mountain-banks quite shut in from the world, joined to their overhanging forest trees; nothing seen

above but a slip of summer blue sky ; beneath but a little brook, and the pink-white daisies beautifying its little fields ; nothing heard but that tinkling brook. In these glens, you are surprised with all the dewy coolness, the pearled grass, the bright pure air, and the early odours of a dawn, after that hour, when, all abroad, the ardours of a July day are already glowing over the whole languishing though glorified landscape, and often exhaling heat fogs, to dim its purity. Neither is token wanting, even in that pretty natural harbour, of the hill-solitude of the effects of that sun's rise ; but tempered as is the glow, you but detect it by a glance of brighter light than can precede the sun, flashing in, (as a sigh of the south-wind just disparts the shrouding foliage,) bringing out in vivider hue to the eye, the delicate tints of the blushing wild-briar roses there ; yet, in coolness, sweetness, freshness, and dewy pureness, it is dawn *there* still.

So our young heroine, who would have been an ardent *woman* elsewhere, was, in her native green mountains, only a more feeling, blushing child.

Our reading here suffered an interruption.

EVENING.

Pennant Melangell, the church of Saint Monacella, under
the Berwyn Mountains.

“PEACE be with thy spirit, gentle Saint Monacella! protectress of the persecuted! patroness of the large and unhappy family of *hares*! everywhere a prey to many enemies, and nowhere finding a sanctuary, except in thy shrine here mouldering now in the romantic solitude of this little trodden valley, shut from the world by mountains, and only vocal with the soft sweet voice of the river Tanad, not long out of its cradle of the mountain rock!”

Such was the spirit of our voiceless vespers offered up on reaching, near sunset, this solitary spot, sunken deep among the bases of the wildest heights, above all which tower, cloudy in highest distance, two, conspicuous yet melancholy to look at, in an almost constant shroud of clouds—Arran ben Lynn, and Arran Mawddy.

In the church lie the remains of the Saint of the above name; and some curious antique carvings in oak commemorate her legend, which

represent several poor hunted hares huddling up to her for protection. She became their real saviour, through the legend, whatever she might be alive; for it is said, that till these vile innovating modern times, that is to say, the 16th century—till the Reformation probably—never hare suffered death in this parish. Even up to a later date, we are told that it was firmly believed, that when a hare was hunted by dogs, you needed but cry, “*God and Saint Monacella be with thee!*” and it would escape.

Talking about this curious and amiable superstition, as our boy-companions were choosing a spot for our gipsy fire for tea, the Doctor remarked—

“If this Saint of blessed memory had but power everywhere, I should always in my rides be bawling out, ‘God and St. Monacella be with thee!’ for my heart always takes part with the pursued against their pursuers, biped and quadruped; besides, to tell you the truth in a whisper, ‘I don’t *like* roast hare!’—It is a charming *tea-garden*, indeed! ‘All is peaceful, all is still’ around us; the gentle look of the evening valley, with geese wending homeward along a strip of greensward on the bank of the little river, their white procession reflected in its placid border pools; the soft and

serene gilding diffused over all objects by the declined sun; the deep quietude of the site of this rustic church; were all in pleasant *keeping* with the artless effigy of the Saint and her little adopted brood, so despised of all besides; and our hearts stirred towards the departed *woman*, through all the chilling disguise of the imaginary Saint, and offered to her gentle disguised memory as some piteous and feeling recluse of this deep dale, a *Nun* of the great tree-grated convent of Nature, that perhaps better homage, which our reason refused to her Saintship."

"We must hurry to get tea, or we shall be too late to finish our story," said Charles, the younger boy, "shall we have our fire here?"

"*There?*" the Doctor cried out, waxing passionate, "why would you burn all those *flowers?* Don't you *see?* further, further! Here's a place——Mind the flame don't catch your hand! for you can hardly see the flame, the sun shines so bright yet, directly flashing up to this spot betwixt the two hills there."

We strolled into the churchyard. Among the common gravestones we found the figure of a man in armour on one very old stone. It somewhat jarred in the harmony of the hour, the scene, and the legend of Monacella. Man

himself was a sort of couching animal and prey here, at the period when the hare was thus protected.

“Himself at once the hunter and the prey,” as Shenstone singeth. In illustration of this, we discovered that the original of this panoplied and armed man, was, despite of both, killed in a spot near here, called *Bwlch Groes Jorwerth*—the pass of the Cross of Jorwerth—a cross being formerly erected where homicide had occurred.

“I would not have bought *his* escape with one of the lives of those poor hares, whose effigies in wood we looked at,” growled the Doctor.

“Why not?”

“Because, firstly, he was a man; secondly, a man of blood.”

“Why, such they all were in that day, in this land that’s now so peaceful,” said the Major.

“This was, I think, the eldest son of Owen Gwynedd, *Jorwerth Drwyndwn*,” rejoined the Doctor, “this, his sepulchral stone, has been removed from its own solitary ‘pride of place’ over his bones or their dust, to this burial-ground.”

As soon as our wayward leader had swallowed

his first three cups of fine tea, he broke forth—
 “There’s a sky, gentlemen! And how like a
 heaven, only more *alive*—for hark at that little
 girl singing somewhere; how like a heaven is
 this world now under it! Can this be that ill-
 reported of, ill-favoured, old wicked world I was
 so sick of in the dead of night, when I awoke
 last night? I could fancy it was some glorious
 new-born one, where sin, sorrow, or death,
 never set foot yet! How soft, simple, yet
 how solemn a scene is this valley! I will read
 while we drink tea, a few stanzas—my *own*.”

THE TWO WELSH RUINS.

Written on seeing the ruin of one of the old Norman Castles,
 and that of an antique Welsh cottage farmhouse, near
 to each other.

“*Bid las Lluarth!*” *

“Let the place be green *again* where the army stood!”

WELSH PROVERB.

THERE’S a horror in *these* hollow walls! though the bloom
 Of wild flow’rs tints their tops in that beautiful blue;
 There’s a whisper of blood in this peace of their gloom,
 Voice of violent deaths as the wind wails through!

* The word *Lluarth* is said to be compounded of *Llu*,
 an army, and *arth*, an hilly place. This short adage
 breathes the gentle and wise aspiration of true patriotism

Strong hold of the tyrant! the Briton's despair—

(He whose gallant heart sunk at your insolent frown,
Hunted here to his rocks like a beast to his lair!)

Down, relic of horror, eternally down!

Bloody to memory, chill to the heart!

Not a *ruin*, but soft restoration *thou* art.

Time, great Liberator!

To Nature restore

This earth, against Nature

Thus wrested of yore,

To the cause of oppression, invasion, and gore!

These chinks, through which famine has cried,

The heart-broken languish'd their last!

These gates so few captives repass'd,

This dungeon where many have died;

These stones whose huge strength crushed their hearts with
its look,

As behind clank'd the chains and the drawbridge shook!

And the moat, with its waters of blood

In the siege, or the murder by night;

All, all to the gentle, the good,

And the wise peace of Nature restore as her right!

opposed to false. *The Army*, is a terrible word! involving a thousand revolting ideas in one sound, and that, to the rabble, one fine and spirit-stirring. The desire of thoughtful humanity is that conveyed in the above motto, that nature and peace may speedily hide with their own colour of God's own painting, the last vestige of the bloody steps of *The Army*! The work of Time, when clothing with green the long harmless wrecks of so many castles erected to subserve the cause of unjust invasion and mailed tyranny, as meet the Welsh traveller, is one of the *few* delightful occupations of his scythe.

The stone be wild quarry again, and its strong
Iron cramps that have entered man's heart, rust here !
Ewes suckle their lambs on the moat's sod long,
And this wreck stand a desert-den, blasted, yet dear
To the thoughtful of soul, here in autumn's sublime,
One merciful work e'en of merciless Time !

Is there then no *fair* ruin, no beautiful *whole*,
Where no gulf keeps the feeling and fancy apart,
Pathetic at once to the eye and the soul,
For the heart of the poet, the pencil of art ?
Yes, this gentler relic ! some shepherd-lord's hall ;
Here the heart sighs consent to the sadness we breathe ;
This home of meek happiness stripped to the wall !
The roof that such happy hearts nestled beneath ;
The rough floor where have played the young *heirs* to a flock ;
Where are they ? here 's nothing but stars and rock,
This damp rocky floor and a huge bed of dock !

Alas for *this* hearth !

On what blithe faces shone

Once the fire where this black earth,

And wall is alone,

And a cavernous hole that the moon shines down !

Alas for this warm winter nook !

The place of the grandfather's chair ;

The white head, the two wither'd hands, where ?

All 's dumb but the voice of their brook !

The brook by the door (the door's cavity now)

Shining still, as if brows were to-morrow to bow

O'er its beauty again, in the thirst

Of the happy hay harvest in noon,

As if the shorn sheep should be thrust

In again, in fresh sheep-shearings soon,

And lovers there linger at eve by the moon !

Where the glittering platters, the skillets of brass,
That oft warmed the *child's*-heart of the housewife? Alas!
The bolt and the ring of the captive still stood,

 In those walls of wild woe; but gone, utterly gone,
 From *these* innocent walls, the meek pomp where it shone,
And the owl hoots in these as on those in their blood!

 Though Hope's voice whispers lowly

 Of *future* awards,

 Small, still melancholy,

 (As in this shepherd-lord's

Wreck of home lives an echo, the brook's babble shrill,

Like a voice in its vault, *man's* for evermore still!)

We mourn that death's *palpable* judgments strike *here*,

While retributive judgment is none till graves ope;

That we *see* the pale hand which compels the hot tear,

But for That which shall "wipe," through death's darkness
 must grope,

Doomed so fiercely to mourn, and so feebly to hope!

NIGHT.

Valley of Pennant Melangel.

OUR night of this day was passed by the Doctor and boys in tent, by us in a hospitable farmhouse, up a mountain gully, full of fine old trees, where a waterfall all night joined its solemn chorus to their murmur round the antiquated grey home. As a farewell at his tent's mouth, ere we left him, our reader gave us this new sort of "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," before we adjourned to our wild domicile.

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A WELSH COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.

[The churchyards in many parts of Wales, in addition to the more interesting decorations of flowers and evergreen sprigs, strewn or planted over the graves, often exhibit a profusion of rather meretricious ornaments: angels, all over gilding or paint, and *very* corpulent; cherubs, looking too heavy for the stone they glorify; the very cross-bones and skull coming in for a share of the finery. The same amiable desire to fight inevitable oblivion, which prompts all this, also leads to grandiloquence in these memorials. Some are inscribed "to the immortal memory;" and "in perpetual remembrance" is frequent on the most perishable—even the wooden ones. From the readiness with which stone of some

sort is to be procured in Wales, the display of upright stones is greater than in English churchyards.]

Who but must pitying smile,
 (Yet inly groan the while,)
 To see *these* tombs design'd for Time's proud conquerors !
 Smile—at the vain unequal war,
 Groan—for man's piteous looking-for
 Of that most dire, black conqueror,
Oblivion — dreadfuller than Death and the “ Pale Horse !”

A goodly thick array,
 In mossy green and grey,
 Is this thy marshalled force, “ Immortal Memory ?”
 Though some lie low, and others lean,
 Bold stand and long they make, I ween—
 Some ten !—some thrice ten years ! !—yea, one—a century !!!

Yet, “ Sacred Memory,”—
Earth's Immortality !
 Hard is your battle o'er this prostrate, passive prey ;
 With such insulting enemy,
 Whose worst is done : who, presently,
 What you report of pompously
 Will fling from his gaunt arm back, back to us and day.

Alas, for your frail stone,
 More short-lived than a bone !
 Up peeps the “ buried majesty ” itself, (a skull,) how dumb !
 Needless this herald pomp, lo ! soon
 Rolls white,—up grinning at the moon,—
 To tell *his own* sad *humbler* tale, your very hero come

Yet *here's* a boastful show
 Of Oblivion's overthrow !
 Mock gold, mock triumph, and mock life of rootless flow'rets
 planted !

Winged seraphims—(of *stone*, alas!)
 And sculpture striving to surpass
 The immortality of grass,—
 Methinks Death grins, a masquer here, thus gilt, o'erbuilt,
 o'erflaunted !

But why these yews, that raise
 Their sable cupolas,
 As if to frown Hope dead, Night darker, Pleasure dumb ?
 Why that old iron tongue of Time,
 Speaking so slow ? for this sublime
 Triumph, why not a happy chime ?
 Why with black banners, sullen sounds, and tears, and
 sobbings come,
 To “ Memory's ” immortal shrine, to Faith's Elysium ?
 If this be Hope's stronghold against Oblivion,
 Why make those cherubs *weep* in stone ?
 Why sculptured skull and cross of bone ?
 As if all, all were lost, the *soul's* self dead and gone ?

Quicker, quicker, gay Death-bell !
 Merrily—if all is well !
 Christ and his Bride are one, the pale priest has done his
 duty !
 'Tis marriage ! silence that wild weeping ;
 Go, Body, to thy Mother's keeping,—
 Go, Spirit, to the Bridegroom who's promis'd to thy beauty !

Ah ! yet—again !—again !—
 To such sad measured strain,
 To a dead march should the soul to her high bridal pass ?
 Ah ! churchyard-haunting Faith and Love !
 Linger *ye here* ? those stars above,
 Yon milky way's refulgent grove,
 Those are *your* proper walk—Despair's, this mortal mould
 and grass.

Vain Man ! thou dost but fight
Death's *shadow* ! through the night
His paleness hath already pass'd, and it hath clos'd behind
him ;
Leave to Omniscient God thy lot,
Him who the meanest worm forgetteth not,
Him who alone can fight thy foe—alone “ in chains can bind
him ! ”

THE MOUNTAIN-DECAMERON.

SIXTH DAY.

ARGUMENT.

The same story continued ; at one stage of which, as the clerical hero thereof changes his residence for a distant part of the Principality—the party resolve to read the sequel in that very neighbourhood.

MORNING.

RISING early we found the morning glorious, and ourselves well disposed to rejoin the Rural Doctor, and partake his commons, and proceeded to where he had bivouacked all night. There, after enjoying the luxury of a *warm* and substantial breakfast out of doors, especially welcome (to him and his) after a night spent out also, the Major, having no fair prospect of angling successfully, desired our reader to proceed with his tale, which he did accordingly.

THE HERMIT VICAR,

CONTINUED.

VINCIT AMOR.

CHAPTER III.

MEN most accustomed to mental dissection, lovers of metaphysical researches, are perhaps the readiest subjects of self-delusion. Mr. Trevor was an example of this. With strong passions, his habits of incessant thought, and an enthusiasm in female perfection, led him rather into the enraptured study of woman as a lovelier and gentler species of man, than into the pursuit of the fair prize as a means of gratification. Woman had been to him a sort of beautiful abstraction, over which he brooded, sometimes sad from baffled desire, oftener entranced in the ideal luxury, like Pygmalion, forgetting at times that the charming object was but his own creation. His mind's model of woman was so high wrought, that such intercourse as a retired scholar could command with the sex, was unlikely to present him with even the faintest likeness. Thus, hugging his exquisite idea of gentleness and grace to his mind rather than heart, he might have lived on like Petrarch, in the eternal dream of love, but for the chance which converted that idea into a

reality, sufficiently faithful to that model to arouse every fiercer passion of his soul, that rush in the train of desire, and so often make “gentle” love the parent of the darkest tragedies of human life—those passions which until the moment when hope gave the word, and let slip the sensual, so long in durance to the imaginative fury—gave little token of life beyond a dark train of thinking, or a heaviness of heart, which he escaped by indulging the present bliss of loving the fair thing before him, as a tutor or father ought. A touch of jealousy first revealed his own real feelings to himself; first made certain that moral revolution within, which had long been wrought unknown to him. A young sporting clergyman, who sometimes joined their dinner-party, was the object. He fancied she exchanged those looks that speak with him. The interval till he convinced himself that he had *but* fancied, was indeed terrible—a hell of pain, and despondent trouble. How then, he began to reflect, was he to endure—not exchange of looks only, but holy vows, but junction of hearts, hands—oh God!—all, all as a mere matter of course, leaving *him* without a pretext for even a murmur? He must bear the very refinement of that cruelty which that cruel and utterly comfortless passion

inflicts, to be jealous without *right* to be so; agonised without even the vent of complaint, without an object he dared to accuse except himself! It was not wonderful that the strong mind of our philosopher fainted under such a prospect, the moment that, the force of his passion was known to him, or that shrinking from its horror, it flew back to that fair forbidden object, with thrice the force, as his white saviour from himself and his thoughts; and hugged the new-born dream, of her marrying *him*—of their *never* separating—with a sort of fatal fury, loving in self-defence, and hating, frightfully hating, also. In fact, he found himself on the very edge of a terrific fall and black gulf in the tide of passion, when he had scarcely deemed himself embarked on it at all, so gentle and imperceptible had been his progress, lullingy deceived by gazing through the blue mirror of its surface, which we may call her eye, down upon the beauties of its inmost depths, that beautified young mind.

Mr. Trevor fell into new and singular habits, allied to deep thought and melancholy. He loved to pass the dead of night out in the fields or woods, but mostly keeping within sight of *Llysdyman* and the moonlight flashing of one peculiar casement in the old mansion—what

need to tell what was its peculiarity? Great would have been his disdain, had any one whispered that the grave tutor walked thus as a despairing lover! One morning he wandered up the lofty wild park of the ancient estate of *Nannau*, as the first streaks of dawn were visible eastward, and taking his stand under a solitary oak of great antiquity, he gazed over the mighty landscape below. Having Tully in his pocket and a Boethius de Consolatione also, he grew impatient of the dusk, and glad to escape from his own thoughts to theirs, the moment the confirmed light of day-spring allowed him to read in his favourite authors. Mr. Trevor was trying to revive his old passion for their eloquent morality, and reached a part where a stoical virtue was enforced with seeming triumphant argument, when the sun showed his first glorious crescent, darting its rays into his watchful eyes, like the first embodying in glory of that sun of truth eternal, which in even an heathen volume flashed conviction of that doctrine, alike taught by Stoic and Epicurean (prior to the corruption of the latter), that virtue is the sole pleasure worthy of man's pursuit. There was something almost awful in that mounting, spreading, silent, serene illumination, which brought forth,

as it were, a world, all glorified, out of the dusk horror of mountainous shadow, and undistinguishable forests in their black; and his mind felt a kindred clearing and re-ascension out of a turbulent despondency, overshadowed by superstition, and a farewell to virtue and good faith. But the very next leaf he turned, presented a little miniature sketch of his pupil, never quite finished, which he once took while she slept, with her head on her music book, and had there deposited. It was a profile of the side face presented to a lamp, the other resting on her delicate hand. It fell to the ground, and his first action after picking it up and viewing it in that level mild glory darting aslant, was to dash the volume to the ground, and looking now at the most innocent face in the world, smiling in sleep on the little ivory, now at the grand orb that gave its sweetness to his eyes, recalling all her childish hours of endearment and helpless reposing on his care,—a train of reflections filled his whole mind, effused half in soliloquy, half in that dumb energy of forcible thinking, which to solitary men is like a voice out of their own bosoms, in high dispute with their passions, rather than the thought of a single being.

“ Oh, my heart! *must* you then turn away

from this love, or be lost? But that very turning away too, *now*, what is it but to be a lost man? And can such a glorious passion be the parent of shame and woe?

“Is it not as if that glorious orb I see now, risen to light up and to vivify all nature, should be really come forth from his purple palace of that East only to bring an ugly night—only to strike into that nature’s breast, thrown open to him, corruption and death? Love! can love, the sun of this microcosm of nature, blast the human bosom? Is it possible that a passion, so exalting to the soul as it *seems*, can be a forbidden, an accursed thing? Can glorious love lead the very soul it glorifies into all kinds of baseness? Impossible! yet how? Treason and treachery, plottings and ingratitude, beset my way if I dare love this beautiful—this sweet—oh! this *my* very creation, this fruit of intensest labour of love—*paternal* love!” And he smothered the little sketch with kisses, devouring as a lover’s on the living lips, while his mind still worked, unconscious of the action. “I obeyed but nature—but *Thee*—oh Thee, I will dare to avow, mysterious God! The housed lamb, which we have pillowed by our hearth, till it feed from our hand, we love it because we have so housed, so fed—the myrtle

that we have planted and sheltered, and watched as it grew, we love it because we have so watched, so planted. Oh ! how much more than a beautiful soul, a mind pure and sweet as that green tree, gentle as that lamb ; oh ! what would a man not do to keep that precious thing, to preserve that dear duty all his own, who has cultured and watched and reared such a mind ?

“ Love and honour ! duty and desire ! Oh, what a wild war do ye wage in poor human bosoms ! Oh, that I were a beast of the forest ! What is this inhuman tormentor, reason ? Oh, that I were a bird of the air, any beast or thing that a wise Providence saves from its wretched guideless self, and assigns its proper bliss, without this mockery and this curse of *Tantalus* ! On this hand stands Love, dressed in all the beauty of heaven, a beckoning angel, an affable archangel, beckon, beckon ! and throwing half open *Paradise* ! On that hand towers Religion, like an angel of wrath, waving us off, off, with a sword of flame, showing all hell ambushed beneath that garden of Heaven’s roses, between us and that white glory of creation we call Woman, perhaps sickening at our unkind delay ! Delicious tempter ! Tremendous threatener ! Angel of hope ! Black angel of wrath infinite ! *Which*, oh ! which of

ye shall poor blind distracted man obey? Who can serve two masters? Yes, two! for oh, how hard to believe that this clash of tyrannous commands *does* emanate from one power! I begin to see much plausibility, if not truth, in that wild faith of the Manicheans, which supposes two mighty principles for ever fighting for mastery over mortal destiny. Else, why the terrible perplexity? Why this feeble heart converted into a very pitfall, to entrap a soul? Oh, what is there resembling a foul and wicked passion in *this*? Would I not toil, not suffer shame, torment, death, for thee, my sweet life's companion? Is *this* selfish? Yet, woe to wretched me if I dare to follow this most holy-seeming impulse! What! How then? Power infinite and mercy infinite, yet both leagued, and both in one Almighty Being, against this little throb? *I'll not believe it!* Either this passion is all heavenly as it appears, and man only, custom only, (the false idol of man,) forbids our obedience to it, or there *are* two fighting powers, or else—ah! whither will my thoughts lead me?—else, there is none, none! Nay, whither *have* they led me? Very lately I was a faithful servant to my benefactor, and a firm believer; already I am in soul a traitor to my trust; one moment a Manichean,

the next an Atheist, and these too are the fruits of my passion, that I thought so heavenly !”

As the fallen man of delicate honour thus pursued the almost interminable maze of a mind “perplexed in the extreme,” the whole landscape had emerged from the gloom of night and its vapours, and he could distinguish the very window of Llysdinam belonging to his pupil’s chamber, where she was as yet sleeping; and the tortured man felt a sensible comfort in that short-lived feeling of her being yet, (a little longer yet !) companioned but by her own virgin innocence and its dreams.

“Had she *but* been of woman’s years !” he pursued, groaning, with his forehead lain against the old oak’s rind. “I looked, and looked as I can do at that gentle-beaming sun of heaven now, upon her baby beauty, and now I cannot revert my eyes when she is risen into glorious womanhood, to blast them and my heart and life together ! *There* was the fault, *that* was the folly. It’s too late now. To *suffer* this passion to take root ; that was the rock I split on ! Having so suffered, to obey it is none ; no, though it lead to perdition ! Compulsion excuses any action. To obey now is not my choice, but my fate, for who can fight against nature ? Now, if in this universal calm and

brightness I carry a heart foul as a charnel-house beneath a temple ; now, if I cannot help half compassing in wish, the death of the innocent ; if my thoughts now fly frantically to banditti on that youth's road, to hurricanes in his ship's course, to leaks, rocks, and sunken sands, to all and everything, as my possible deliverers, my own saviours from a cruel death—a death of heart, crueller than the worst they could inflict on *him*, his mere body ;—what is this all but the desperation of Nature's own voice within me ? the wild justice of her law of self-salvation ? And, even in that fatal first period did I not outdo a guardian's part ? Have I even up to this moment, overstepped the line of a faithful preceptor, in conduct, word, or action ? And even with all this, am I not debating my way in a mere dream, a possibility, if she should strangely retain the child's love for me in her woman's heart ? Ah my God ! but a dream ? *If* so, it were better to die at once than bear these thoughts and doubts ! Yet, if she *should*—oh ! then I violate all the laws of honour ! but in so doing, I obey, as strong at least, those of nature. Oh, yes," he passionately exclaimed in that dewy green breadth of solitude all round him, under the lone tree, stretching his arms to that well-known window, flashing

with the sun's long lines of radiance, "my innocent, my fond! let the world and its stern laws condemn us—were it possible, ah! were that possible; could it be that you should languish for him to cherish you *ever*, on whose bosom I may almost say you have dreamed away your childhood, Oh, Hester! welcome, welcome, welcome there for life, amid a whole world's hissings, so they distress not *thee*! I would dare to turn to Nature, to God himself, while a new life stretched glorified before me like this golden world now. The *world*? It scorns I'd scorn; its conventional bondage I'd burst asunder! Shame, fear, age itself, should fly before thy spring of beauty! What's age to me if she can love me? How can I grow old, *she* hanging those ivory arms round my neck? Oh, a withered man, clasped by such freshness of young beauty, is like this oak over my head, that looks as green as ever in its youth, from the green ivy clinging round its boughs, though itself but a hollow ruin were it stript of their beauty!"

Such was the final farewell to honour and duty, of a lofty mind. Superstition had already a strong hold on that mind; hence it was not without a shudder that the remembrance rushed on Mr. Trevor, that the hollow tree he leaned

against, and which he made his symbol, had fulfilled during forty years, the office of a *tomb*, secreting a murdered man ! It was that oak in the park of Nannau, in which Owain Glyndwr concealed the fresh bleeding corpse of Hoel Sele, whom he murdered during a parley, and in which it remained undiscovered during that long period.*

CHAPTER IV.

Will he no longer beautify his mind with the doctrines of Plato, of Aristotle, of Democritus, and Pyrrho—and I know not how many from the venerable Porch and the Academy?—

St. Gregory's Funeral Oration on Cæsarius.

SUCH were the feelings and such was the secret predicament of that thoughtful clergyman, followed by his fair pupil, whom his patron rather rudely, (under the influence of potations,) summoned into the room at the Goat. Possibly this elaborate exposition of his internal state, was necessary towards explaining the after conduct of a man of a very unworldly character ; possibly *not*. If the latter be the correct conjecture, the reader has

* This tree was standing in Nannau park till blown down, I think in 1812.

only to hug himself in his possession of finer tact in the science of war between passions, in hearts' lore, than the writer gave him credit for. He has not probably passed a more idle half hour in wandering the dark labyrinth of a mind, than he might have done in following some "fashionable novelist," through many an intrigue of the bon ton, and many a princely or ducal dialogue, possibly not a whit more faithful to genuine fashion, than this ill imitation to nature.

After the announcement made by Mr. Rowlands of 'Cousin Ned's' speedy arrival, Mr. Trevor found the young lady sitting with the tea which they had just ordered, still unmade before her, her cheek on her hand. Nor had that paleness, which overspread her features at those words of her father, even abated in ghastliness, as if awe and anxious palpitation prolonged what terror had produced at first. Mr. Trevor felt all the embarrassment of a boy forced upon a declaration of love in this advent of a change, which demanded instant overtures, or its final abandonment. In his first impulse (which was to fly to her as a fellow-sufferer, to comfort and be comforted) he first felt forcibly, and with self astonishment, how very little their mode of intercourse

now differed from that of her childhood, except in being far more constrained ; how little from the very strictest that her own father, or even her jealous-eyed and politic uncle himself, would have approved. Nor did Miss Rowlands evince any, the least, disposition to repose her profound feeling of some kind, which kept her statuelike, pale, cold, and abstracted, on that bosom which was panting to afford her that soft support she so evidently needed ; for it was with difficulty she steadied her quivering voice enough to force some common remark, and her whole bowing, sinking deportment proved her to be resisting, painfully, the tendency of her thunder-stricken mind and frame to faint away.

The long absence of the fascinating and merry young priest, who caused the tutor so much pain, had removed the last vestige of jealousy. But to fear and to hope beyond all bounds, on the slightest foundation, is the characteristic of passion. The idea of him now rushed back on his mind, under this chilling solitariness of his pupil's deep emotion, and he then first began to suspect that the visitor had carried away with him, after all, the secret heart of Miss Rowlands. Correspondence, assigna-

tions, plotting maid-servants, all once more rose to his troubled fancy, and increased his own abstraction and coldness of demeanour.

Thus they sat, after exchanging a brief remark or two on the announced event, each absorbed in a secret and different train of deep thoughts, while the tea they were beginning, which she made, at last, with a trembling hand, remained hardly tasted in their cups, and Mr. Trevor, in obedience to Mr. Rowlands' request, accompanied her homeward.

It was a bitter moment to the quickly depressed lover. He had but just thrown off his fealty to those fine principles of virtue—virtue obeyed, for her own adored sake, no hope of heaven, nor terror of heaven's wrath!—he had just exchanged the blessing of a good conscience for that more frail and questionable blessing—a virgin love; and now he more than doubted the dear-bought prize being in his reach! This shrinking of her confidence from him in this critical moment, proved that it was but the child's tenderness, not the woman's passion, which had turned to him for sympathy. Pride interposed to receive his fallen spirit, and the philosopher triumphed again; so much so, indeed, that where the twilight wood allowed their walk under its edge,—where the

struggle of passion which transformed his countenance in speaking might not be visible,—he talked very calmly of her future wedded life and his own fulfilled duties,—the extreme generosity with which her father had recompensed him,—(he having, indeed, supplied him with the profusion of a fond brother, rather than the calculating punctuality of an employer)—and Miss Rowlands replied with a dignity unusual to her intercourse with him.

It seemed evident that the moment of her future husband's near arrival, so long deferred, had rushed on her mind like a crisis, which that delay had almost disarmed of its first terrors; while, instead of finding himself the object for whose sake that crisis was so terrible, he was the aged Mentor—too truly a father—from whom it was her whole struggle to conceal her agitation, her despair!

Their steps, without a word of concert, deviated from the direct way to Llysddinam, so that they found themselves on the wild banks of the Mawddach, whence the sea, at about six miles distance, was seen gorgeous with the last warm flush of a sunset succeeding what had been a truly Italian day. The rocks which skirt all the little bays into which that superb stream indents the foot of Cader Idris on one

side, and the mountains stretching away towards Harlech on the other, are profusely clothed with purple of the heath and wild thyme,—trees hang from every crevice,—every winding turn of the river converts it to the eye into a lake, with wildly beautiful borders of natural shrubbery of oak, beech, and fir,—or else into a continuous sea,—a blue and brimming estuary,—the river's mouth being so near as to make it seem a shallow inlet of the ocean.

The feelings of Miss Rowlands had their evident effect on her strength, and when they reached a great recess in the fractured rocks, overhung by trees, her fatigue made it rather a thing of course, than courtesy, for the tutor to invite her to a seat on a mossy slab of the rock full facing the bay, the estuary, the ocean, and that picture of mingling earth and sky, glorious, yet fast-fading ; for now those crimson flushes that waved so wide, so vast, so bright all round the region of sunset, like mighty banners floating, were visibly paling their glories like a beautiful cheek, whose whole heart's blood, blushing there the previous minute, is rapidly forsaking that cheek before the deadly paleness from the advent of a sudden death. The deep silence of the refulgent departing

scene, broken but by the drip of springs oozing down through the rock strata, and between the twisted roots of their “semilunar cave,”—the profound peace which the scattered white* mountain-houses of Barmouth looked from the distance across the estuary, their watery reflection still visible in headlong beauty in the calm sea at high tide, becalmed around its promontory,—the whole of this sublime repose and harmony was to the self-imprisoned man of melancholic passion—gloom—distraction—despair!

There needed no palpable picture of that heart-communion he panted for to wring the tutor’s soul. Yet this, too, chance presented in a fisherman, who, crossing that solemn wild grot’s opening, with his coracle† slung as usual at his back, with its pitched black concavity nodding above his head, was met by his wife, with a little child, advancing a short way to meet him from his grey antique home under the mountain.

* The houses are built in an extraordinary manner, in tiers, on ledges of a precipice of rocks.

† The *Coracle*, or oval boat of pitched basket work, to receive one person, common in some rivers of Wales, seems still true to the model of such used by the ancient Britons, as described by Julius Cæsar.

Mr. Trevor watched the affection with which the housewife helped the basket-boat from his neck, where it was strapped, exchanging his light load for a lighter and sweeter, that of a rosy baby, while she grotesquely loaded herself with the coracle. Never had the college recluse tasted the sweet interchange of tender feeling; and the cold, pallid, deeply abstracted form which sat drooping near him, shut up in total solitariness, at that very moment while he was ready to rush and throw himself on her pity for life,—for that tenderness which then, in that mighty peace, seemed as essential to life as life's own warmth, or breath, or blood,—*she* too clearly gave token that such blessedness was not for him—never—now to cheer the remainder of a life run to waste. A sort of savage tenderness at once melted and infuriated his nature, as he looked on that conjugal kindness for a minute, such as a lonely lioness, newly bereft of her young, might feel on seeing another fondling her's in all security. Full to bursting, he withdrew purposely to avoid constraint of her presence, and leaned apart, yet still watching her. Her emotion took all the pathetic character of drooping illness, yet her beauty was heightened. “And *I* am not the friend she turns to for

comfort, long as we have been together !” he groaned. “That sweet office is not for *me* !”—as he groaned a sail caught his eye in the sea distance, as if sleeping in whiteness on that paradise of clouds and rosy waters melting into one, not yet faded, which formed its background. Like an electric shock, the idea smote him, that her cousin was in that vessel ; and it became as the wing of that vulture of heathen fable hovering over the bleeding bosom of Prometheus, bound by chains to his rock, as he, by all the bonds of duty, to his cold and loveless part of a mere *tutor*.

That landscape of a sea,—that sea which had been long his only solace, as cutting off that horrible and hateful object, for a time ‘at least, was now bearing him on and on to murder his peace, and blot all landscape from the earth to him for ever ! “Oh, not for me that office !” he reiterated, as gazing, he saw her lean herself against a jutting crag’s thick ivy, as if in cold substitution for some trusted bosom.—“God ! then for whom ?” Mr. Trevor almost exclaimed aloud—“For him ! Diseases wither him, health, and hope, and heart, as he withers mine !” said he in insuppressible torment. “But this is a terrible coast to the mariner ! there’s night to be passed yet ! there’s danger yet,

near as he is ! Fool ! she dreads him as much as I do. Some other has brewed that dumb storm she is now smothering in her own poor bosom."

In a minute Miss Rowlands, roused by his suddenness of appearance, starting upright from her reclining posture, saw her usually composed and dignified tutor standing pale as the dead, wild-gestured as the mad, before her ! His right arm at full length pointed to that sail—"What see you there, Madam?" said Mr. Trevor, "my heart is too full, I must speak or die ! Look there !"

"Oh, sir !" was all the reply of the astonished girl.

"Aye, aye, *you* see nothing ! you see only a sail and a fine sea, but by Heaven and all its plagues ! I see mourning and madness, torment and violent death, behind that false picture ; and all coming this way, all threatening *here* ;" and he struck his bosom wildly. "God forgive me !" he pursued, seeing that he had terrified her. "*Can* you forgive me ? I'm ill—I'm in pain—I'm mad ! My dear, dear pupil ! your wretched master's mad, but he cannot hurt *you*—forget this, if you can, Miss Rowlands ; forget and forgive ; and for God's sake, don't expose me !" Ashamed and shocked

into propriety by her cold astonishment, he took a few strides to recover himself, returned, seated himself by her side, and strove, by speaking calmly on the topic of her marriage, to obviate, if possible, the impression his violence must have produced.

She averted her head, but he saw her agitation by the rapid and high heaving of that side of her bosom next to him, and she trembled all over. Again he was emboldened to look quite round till his face fronted her's. He found her bathed in secret tears; but not for him: for, rising with a dignity new to her diffident gentleness, which gave seeming increase to her stature and years to her youth, Miss Rowlands said with a frown, "What have I done, sir, to deserve this insult?"

"Nothing, Madam; an unguarded moment,—it was the first time."

But while he stammered broken sentences in excuse, she added quickly, "I believe you mistake me, sir—I complain of your recurring continually to the subject, you know—you *must* have known—I cannot bear to think upon;—and I consider that you wish to force me into talk, and talk yourself so gravely and with such seeming satisfaction about my engagement, and what is coming upon me, for *no other purpose* than to wind out of me my secret mind!"

“ You have a secret, then, Miss Rowlands,” he said, starting, “ some secret ? ”

“ Oh, sir,” said she, interrupting him in a lowered melancholy tone, “ why such disguise ? You have been long aware,” she hesitated at each word, “ *aware* that there is a person ; that my feelings do not follow my father’s and uncle’s wishes ; and now the secret’s *half* told ! but you, sir, would force me to be more explicit, and entrust you with the whole, which I never *can* do ! ”

“ That you love ? ” he cried wildly, “ you love another ? Pardon me, Miss Rowlands, such language, but speak, quick, for God’s sake ! speak ! ”

Tremulously, with face averted, she said, “ My cousin *was* indifferent, he *is* hateful, horrible to me ! He may come, he may demand me ; but I am no longer the child I was when I entered into such a rash engagement, and promised I knew not what. And will you, Sir, as a Christian minister, you, as my tutor, guardian, oh ! what have you not been to me ? my second father, will *you* urge me to go to the altar, and swear what my heart belies, to love *him*, to honour *him* ? to do what I never can, make him happy, so wretched as I should be myself ? ”

She seemed to pause for a reply, or her violent agitation checked her utterance. The same cause kept him, thus appealed to; dumb, breathless in suspense. Miss Rowlands, unhappily, had never had occasion to practise self-denial, nor had a mother to teach the grace and importance to peace of mind and future prospects, of such practice in early years.

The interval seemed but to give time for the brewing tempest of her bosom, now, for the first time, bursting restraint, to rush forth for human sympathy; for she resumed more vehemently, and all bashfulness seemed lost, "I cannot go to that altar unperjured, therefore I *will not go!* I call Heaven to witness I never will! I never can—my heart would fail me! my limbs would fail me! my lips would not utter such a vow! my heart would burst before I left the church! I should faint at the altar steps! die before the *night!*—nay, I *would!* Oh, sir, will you ever say that so feeling 'I *ought* to go?' You will not, you cannot! My dear master will not say so! Oh, do not! pray, pray do not!" Her very nature, retiring and timid, was forgotten in the outbreak of long-pent passion. She wrung her hands, and wept before him without concealment, shame, or restraint.

Set off at a freezing distance by this appeal to him as an umpire, a guardian in this conflict of her feelings between duty and passion, for some object forbidden by that duty, the unhappy man stood aghast, shrunk into himself with his years and his shame, cursing his vanity which had rendered him ridiculous in her eyes and his own, and almost wished that the mountains would yawn and swallow him alive, so to hide him from that presence so suddenly become insupportable. "Yes," she added solemnly, venturing to read his countenance, "I have a vow upon my soul, more binding, I do believe, than that child's promise,—having trusted you so far, why should I stop short? I have secretly vowed my *woman's* heart, and hand, and soul, to another!"

Miss Rowlands hid her face with her hands, repentant and shocked the next instant, at her own confession, while Mr. Trevor could only hollowly re-echo the fatal sound, "Another!" Suddenly he broke forth, "Then God in heaven bless that *other* with you, and you with him, and both with long life and all blessedness, and *me* with my only wish and want left *now* in this wide, empty, cursed world, a grave! a grave!" Bowing to and fro in the agony of his new conviction, with one hand holding his forehead, with his right he seized hers as if for a last

farewell grasp, while returning bashfulness led her to still, with one extended hand, conceal her burning cheek. But, at the grasp and the half-audible groan of his inward voice, "farewell, my dream, farewell!" she stole a look at his face, and saw there a heartbrokenness so affecting, a parting gaze so full of doting, yet so passionless in its despair, that the dark-eyed gazer stole at once the passport and claim to virgin pity and holy blandishment of death itself! so that modesty, thrown off its fence, felt no more alarm in the presence of such a countenance than in the pathetic pleading of the shroud, and no more formality of restraint. To his astonishment, he felt his hand's grasp *returned* by that small and delicate one, with almost answering warmth of pressure!

And now it was lain on his lips to stop that ominous ejaculation which he reiterated, "a grave! a grave!" Yes, she, the bashful, the all-concealing girl, who would have started the previous moment at the idea of those white arms enfolding any neck but her father's, expanded those beautiful arms and closed them on the *lover* disguised in the *mourner*! nor stopped, but murmured "*Here!*" as they opened for him a *grave* which rapture indeed might delight to fill, though but to die in! And thus, emotion overpowering all reflection, she

slightly pressed to her heaving bosom the thunder-stricken and yet incredulous object of a first love, as long formed, as secret, and perhaps little less intense, than his own! Let not the innocence of her character suffer in the estimation of the modest and innocent! *Pity*, and not *passion*, it was, that dictated the action. Pity and love combined, what can resist?

Mr. Trevor could hardly believe his senses, and it required a minute's reflection before he could comprehend that the "other" who so alarmed and confounded him, was no "other" than Mr. Trevor. Then she blushed scarlet at her own action, astonished at the momentary madness which impelled her to it, yet, darted on him such a sudden, beautiful, delighted, almost fiery smile, through her watery eyes, (the rapture of her young heart under that very *first* assurance she had felt of being loved again,) that it was like a sun-beam leaping out of a stormy cloud and playing on a silvery fountain! nor less dazzling to the mind of her tutor-lover, was that flashing of her bosom-fire, than that outbreak of day's glory to the eye.

The unguarded girl, when she first began to speak on the subject, had little thought of being so far overcome by his violent emotion, his melancholy, his despair, as to divulge her own. With that avowal of having "loved *an-*

other," she meant to stop, and to lock for ever in her heart the secret *whom* her heart had broken for, till (possibly) after her death ; for Miss Rowlands had, like him, her secret moments of passionate despondence, which he as little dreamed of as she of his. The advent of marriage was to her an eternal parting from a delightful companion of her existence, an anxious watcher over her peace and comfort ; in short, a fond father, whose fondness she had *no claim* to, and which, therefore, demanded all her gratitude.

In her simplicity, she had never detected his passion for herself ; however nature prompted the artless girl to act the pretty coquet sometimes (as in the case of the young clergyman) in the pure pleasure of being an object of importance, enough to excite his *jealousy*, not that of love ; as she might have played with the fond exclusiveness of a brother's love. The moment that parting became an imminent evil, the very date almost fixed, opened up the poor girl's own heart to herself like an abyss, and overwhelmed her, as has been seen, bereaving her almost of even the self-restraint of modesty. She was to leave that hand, which had once led her like a child in the flowered fields ; that arm which she had in later times

leaned on, for the mere pleasure of being upheld by it; those studies that would never more please, alone; that graceful, pensive affectionate man of feeling, and of even feminine delicacy of taste, who would not have alarmed the modesty of an angel, come down to our grosser sphere; that familiar interesting object which combining every species of ascendancy that mind can acquire over mind, *except* youth, derived, even from that privation, perhaps a hold but more sure, by its adding some degree of reverence to pleased approval, as the fine melancholy of the world's withering, in the first mellow beauty of autumnal landscapes, seizes more forcibly the imagination than does even the glory of the green spring itself. She was to leave for ever that being, long identified with the very nature around her! for with him (hanging on that hand, that arm, that paternal smile, those eloquent lips) had her whole woman's being been spent. What wonder if his long delayed avowal, following instantly on that overwhelming crisis of her bosom's fate, produced an outbreak of feeling, which perhaps the fastidious will hardly consider pardonable, even under that double trial of self-control in a weak and fond nature, little subjected to control of any kind?

CHAPTER V.

“Heaven! wherefore saidst thou, that we must not err,

“And yet mad’st woman?”

——“Why accuse you Heaven?”

SHIRLEY’S BLACK PRINCE.

“MY dear,” said Mr. Rowlands, one evening that he had returned from the Goat before twelve at night, “I am not well.”

“Oh, Sir, what do you feel?” said his daughter, snatching his shaking hand, “I was afraid so by your being at home so early! What is the matter?”

“All of a tremble my love, fainter than ever! with a great* loathing. But we must change our brandy merchant I think, this last stock is like cold water, and I feel the want of my cordial—my poison, God help me! I should rather call it; but there’s no going back now, the heart is clean out of me. I, that used to be like the Iron Man, in one of your fairy tales, no, the Fairy Queen? What is it? such a man that every body gave thirty years life to come, and here I fancy I’ve not got thirty months, no, not thirty hours perhaps.”

“Oh father! don’t say that,” Miss Rowlands

* *Welshly* idiom for nausea.

said, bursting into tears, "pray let me send for the doctor."

"Nay, fetch me a little of that cold stuff, my love, the rum I mean. It's just like water in my stomach, so can't do me harm if it do no good. Don't cry, my sweet wench," said the father, stroking her wet cheek, "you'll make me cry too at thought of leaving such a dear good girl alone in the world. But not alone neither; Ned will be coming directly and be down here, I warrant, with his father. Oh! what a dear good child have I left to live by herself," he muttered to himself, "for the sake of brandy, and that brandy-faced blackguard that picks my pocket with a bow. Well, 'tis too late now. Why, G—— d——n the rascal, there now! this rum's three parts water! Can't feel it here! If they'd always sent me such liquor I would not have been what I am now. Where's the tutor, my dear?"

"Gone to bed, I believe, Sir."

"Never came *to* me nor *for* me to-night? Not affronted, is he?"

"Oh, my dear father, no! But let me send for medical help, pray do; but not for young Hobnail:—pray send for Dr. Sly at once."

"Well, my love, if *you* fetch the apothecary, he'll fetch the other, you know it's all the

same. The first thing he says, after making one have the trouble of hoisting one's tongue out, is always, 'Better send off for Doctor Sly, Sir.' You must bid Dick saddle the roan horse ready to start for the doctor, if you *do* fetch Hobnail, but wait *a bit*—I can't bear the bother of answering their d——d questions till I'm better."

"Oh pray don't delay, and do have another apothecary. You might be dead before the doctor could come the distance. I shudder to think what harm that man might do before he comes, which he can't undo. Why, papa, do you employ that young man, when you think him so ignorant?"

"*Why*, my love, *why*?" asked her father, staring surprised. "My dear sweet creature, what are you thinking of? Employ another surgeon? Don't you know the booby was born and bred on our *own* grounds all his life? Did n't *my* father put *his* father into a bye tack of our farm, near the top of the mountain, where he opened a very large closet of all sorts of herbs and salves, and set up for himself as a 'cunning man,' and charmed folks and horses after being dead lame. But as for this ass, for I don't deny that he *is* an ass, my love; why he comes as *natteral* to me as my own big

stable boy Dick himself, that I reared from a brat in swaddling clothes. You must needs allow then how *unnatural*-like it would seem to see any other than his fool's face come inside *my* doors as *my* doctor? No, my love! I can't think of such a thing. Besides, I won't *swear* there's *not* some kin of blood betwixt his family and our's in some distant degree."

Miss Rowlands laughed and sighed almost at once, saying, "Pray, Sir, do not drink again of this clear brandy; your face is flushed, and you talk too much."

Mr. Rowlands looked hurt, but set down the silver tankard. "Nay, Hester, girl, come don't take part with his conscience—(*that's* sharp enough)—against your poor sot of a father! You can't say I'm drunk *now*, neither. Ecod, they were pleasant times when I *could* get drunk! I could hunt then, and feel a sort of thrill run up from your little fubsy hand through mine, my poor girl! quite up into my heart, and make my eyes water, as you sat on my knee when your dear mother first left you alone to me. Not but I love you, aye, even more than I did *then*, but *some* how—d——n it, I don't know *how* it is!—It's all dull, drowsy—one *can't* care for any thing—all's like a dream

and a troublesome one. My *heart's* dead within me, I think. I'm not sure I *could* shed a tear, if your sweet body lay a corpse *afore* me! Yet I *do* love you. But don't *you* find fault, though he deserves it, with your half dead father, as if you thought him a nasty drunkard!—as I *am*, God forgive me!”

Miss Rowlands threw her snowy arms round her father's neck, and herself on his lap, and sat sobbing, “You are my dear, tender, best of fathers!” she could utter no more.

“I'm better! I'm better! *much* better now,” said Mr. Rowlands. “Let alone sending to-night, but you perceive my love, *don't* you perceive? that I am bound to send for nobody else but Jack Hobnail.”

“Indeed, Sir, I don't though,” said Miss Rowlands, now able to laugh (deceived by the treacherous exhilaration of his last *dram*) at the grotesque mode in which her father's goodness and his prejudices developed themselves, to the outrage of common sense and his own imminent peril.

His *amor patriæ* bore somewhat of the same affinity to a generous virtue, that the dull reversed side of a beautiful pictorial transparency bears to the fine distinct landscape on the right side.

“ Oh, I forgot, I forgot ! Does he know that Sir Edward has got the living for him,—a *good* living ? ”

“ For *whom*, papa, for *Hobnail* ? ”

“ Why for Mr. Trevor, child, to be sure, Mr. Trevor ! Gone to bed sulky, I warrant ; I was so rude to him at the Goat. Tell him I am very, very sorry ! —— a great ass, I allow, —— too hard on poor Bolus, girl ! —— and my *whole* arrears of rent for brandy-and-waters, —— the unconscionable dog ! Where is my old friend Trevor ? ”

“ Oh Sir, how you frighten me ! ” said the daughter, as Mr. Rowlands ran on, confusing himself, while a strange frequent twitch of the angles of his mouth disfigured his face. “ Are you worse ? ”

“ Better, my love, *much* better ! Ah good Mr. Trevor, good-hearted Mr. Trevor, he *has* been a father to you ! he’s — he’s — Hester ! ” Mr. Rowlands said with energy, almost rising in his chair, and rousing himself from lethargic confusion of ideas by an effort, while he fixed his once benevolent eyes full on her face, looking almost himself again, “ I may ’nt live to *see* you married, yet mind, I wish *Trevor* to marry you — *mind* ! ”

“ *Me*, papa ? He marry *me* ? Mr. *Trevor* and *me* ? ” she exclaimed, with an incredulous

timidly pleased look, and a blush that actually seemed burning her cheek.

“Why, girl alive! where’s the oddity of that? Why not be married by your best friend in the world, and the best man in the world? that true gentleman, that fine scholar, that——”

Miss Rowlands saw her *too* ready false apprehension, and concealed her confusion by a very loud laugh. Mr. Rowlands re-echoed that laugh, but with one so long, so strange, and so childlike, ending in an infantile shrill wail, that she raised her eyes, down-cast in shame before, to his face. There was something there also wild and vacant; the smile seemed no more his own than the laugh, yet he looked at her most stedfastly.

“Dear father, how you frighten me! how you look at me! you are ill again! oh, you’re worse! I’m sure he is!” No answer was returned; and she saw his eyes, though still fixed on her, grow inexpressive as dead eyes, and that he never winked or stirred the glazing balls at all. Meanwhile his hand gradually relaxed its tender grasp of her’s. Screaming, she flew to the bell, then down stairs for help; but her father was already beyond human help, and escaped his suicidal suffering. Though to appearance dead, however, of apoplexy, and

never to be conscious of existence more, he still breathed. If a chance had remained of his system recovering from its oppression, that chance would not have escaped the hands of the young 'doctor,' his 'Welshly' favourite, his 'fool' and his 'doctor' in one, a worse conjunction than Colley Cibber as both 'fool and poet'* (laureate). The apothecary as usual, dispatched an express for the physician; but by way of doing something, drew his lancet, and amused the long interim by the abstraction of a very large quantity of blood, in which '*bold*' practice (the unlucky boast of many a rustic Sangrado in Wales, whose only just claim to praise would be a *timid* practice) the inexperienced young man was confirmed by the bloated appearance of his patient, which to his ignorance indicated plethora, as did further the huge pulse thumping under his finger, though really indicative of the extreme relaxation, and consequent size and dilatation of the artery, the effect of a premature old age, and always to be found in very old persons.

Mr. Rowlands' long previous habit, of sub-

* "But now we're so saving, I'd have ye to know it,

Our Colley, he serves both for 'Fool' and for Poet."

Our Court formerly kept a professed "Fool," to which the above epigram alluded.

sisting on strong stimulus, entered not into this bold practitioner's estimate; so he set to most vigorously, about exhausting the patient of the small remaining stock of vitality.

Doctor Sly, arriving at last, *approved* (in the presence of Mr. Trevor and the distracted young lady) of all his young friend had done; but to the astonishment of the tutor (who alone was enough himself to remark the contradiction,) commenced silently a course of curative efforts, precisely opposed to those of the raw apothecary, resorting to the strongest cordials and stimuli. The source of this ostensible approval and practical condemnation of the young man's practice, lay deep in the arcana of at least Welsh (possibly English) professional tactics. Perhaps the shortest mode of explanation may be to say, that the incompetent 'surgeon' (by courtesy) of a Welsh town, acts the part, to the distant physician, of the jackall to the lion. It used to be believed, that that creature, hunting for the lordly beast, set up a howl, when it brought down a prey, and tasted it not, or only lapped a little of the blood until the arrival of his lord. In like manner, always provided that the doctor can maintain for some incompetent man, who has no confidence *in himself*, a certain *nicely limited* confi-

dence or rather friendship in the minds of his *patients*—a confidence by no means so entire that they dare trust him by *himself*, nor so weak as to discard him altogether ; in that case a sort of holy alliance is formed between the parties, on this principle : a patient being procured by the *tolerated* agent, as the prestrate prey—the jackall-apothecary (the decoy) sets up a very lamentable yell indeed, (be the *case* ever so *light*, if the patient's purse be but *heavy*,) and never dares to act without help of—the third party—the physician. Never be it said, that he does ever fulfil the part of the lordly beast, who rewards his faithful jackall with some share of the prey—by ordering an enormous volley of pill and potion, to the nauseous martyrdom of the unhappy patient ! The politic M.D.'s mock sanction of young Hobnail's conduct, which has just been described, will now be understood. * The efforts of the

* A system this, well worthy of reprobation, and therefore (though perhaps out of place) exposed here, inasmuch as it tends directly to subjecting the dwellers of a town or district to the least competent of the surgeon-apothecaries, instead of the most trustworthy. It must be evident that he least worthy of trust, the least confident in his own skill, will be the man most lauded by such crafty physician ; a great abuse

physician to covertly counteract the mischievous effects of his young friend's practice, proved unavailing, and Mr. Rowlands expired without any return of consciousness, on the ensuing morning.

The shock of this calamity was perhaps scarcely less astounding to the tutor than to the fond daughter, whom for a time it bereft of sensibility, and almost of her senses. Besides that his heart bled for the unhappy victim of a fatal habit, fears and perturbations innumerable beset it, in the very moment of its exultant bliss of being beloved again. The dues of mourning, of decency, all required now a long suspension at least, of that dear though dishonourable pursuit of her hand, which he had but yesterday dared to dream of. And during that suspension and his own absence, now instantly required by his nomination to the living his kind patron had so timely procured for him—what might not—what must not occur—perilous, if not fatal to his success! In what a moment were the fond preceptor and the heart-stricken faint-

of his influence, and injury to the public, when it is considered how much depends on prompt first measures of cure, and therefore how generally human life depends (in cases of danger) on the ability, prudence, and experience of the *surgeon-apothecary*.

ing orphan his pupil to separate ! Now it was that she first felt more than a want—a necessity for a supporting friend, and now it was that he, whom she had fatally made more than friend in her secret heart, was to leave her unsupported, nay, worse—leave her to his enemies—leave to him who had acquired a fatal right to alone render that support ! It now seemed as if fortune had allowed to the imprudent girl one opportunity of redeeming her false step, and retreating from the toils of that ensnaring passion (which could scarcely end happily, or at least honourably), by throwing her, as it were, by force of circumstances, into the arms of him who had her troth, while softened by woe and helpless in her solitude, left without one other bosom into which to weep or pour her filial sorrows and regrets ; and Mr. Trevor revolved all this in his mind, with a whirling clash of resolves, all short and contradictory, which made him acquainted with some part of the terrible feelings of the turbulent mad. The issue of all, however, was a compromise between the rashness of his jealous terror, and the plotting prudence of his love or his selfishness of passion. The Baronet arrived some weeks after the funeral took place. *Edward* Rowlands was on the road ! yet Mr. Trevor hardly la-

mented that his presence at his new living required his instant departure, already delayed by this event, so intolerable to him was now the idea of witnessing his first interview with Hester as his betrothed mistress. Yet he foresaw that, be he where he might, his jealous mind *would* make him a witness to it, with perhaps imagination's tenfold torment. Though the presence of death and mourning imposed a sad restraint on their mutual feelings, arrangements for their correspondence were made, vows exchanged, future flight and holy union, indistinctly alluded to by him, were with weeping and a sort of filial obedience, rather understood than promised by her; and thus with all that may be well imagined of tender and empassioned, yet subdued by a sense of decency to the recently dead, parted the drooping orphan and the reverend Mr. Trevor.

EVENING.

Llyn Tivy and its Mountains, Cardiganshire.

“ A DREARY region this ! ” said the Major, as we traversed this wild solitude in a silence insensibly imposed by that profound stillness prevailing here.

“ And a dismal contrast for our Abelard of Wales, the tutor of our late story,” added the Rural Doctor, “ coming direct from the smiling luxuriance of the banks of the Mawddach and the rich pastoral landscapes every where round Dolgelly.”

“ We will pursue his history,” I rejoined, “ if you please.”

“ But *tea* first ! if *you* please,” said he. So we went on in search of what was hard to find in these extensive wastes, a pleasant place for that meal.

“ The countrie all round Llyn Tywi (thus wrote Leland in the reign of Henry the Eighth) is horrible with sight of bare stones.” Though the prevailing surface is russet sheepwalk, yet the stony entrails of the mountains so frequently stand all about staring, almost ghastly,

through the brown treeless soil, that we could well recognise the truth of the old traveller's description. The *Llyn* is the same dark and melancholy pool, ever agitated with winds, and beating its banks, rarely heard of human ears, that it was in his day. The *Llyn du*, "black lake," retains that darksome hue of its water, whence it took the name. The "Lake of the yellow quaking bog," as it is called by the Welsh, exhibits the same sickly and rank sallow herbage on its borders, that caused it to be so named. These, and various other pools, gleaming in the sea-like distance of treeless waste, and those stony ruins of the mountain, lying about in the deep stillness, broken by only a disturbed kite, or the hollow and low but constant blowing of a wind resembling one laden with snow, even under a summer sun, all that characterises these shelterless and lofty wilds, had presented themselves to old Leland precisely as to us.

We remarked the wild shyness of the sheep, those creatures which down *below*, in the world of life and homes, seem so little alarmed at man. Here they gaze, start, and fly, with all the alarm and almost the agility of deer.

In spite of our number, and the glee of *boy-travellers* at our side, we were conscious of

solitude in all its influence on the mind, far more than any one of us, if *quite* solitary, would have done in a cultivated landscape *below*.

The mere meeting of a man, (some one of these lonelier shepherds of the heights,) after long lonely pedestrianism, up here, is quite an incident—and his figure, as first discovered in the wide undulations without bound of withered looking sod and reddening fern, round which the eye rolls for an object in vain, becomes almost a *startling* one. It looks gigantic from the absence of all vertical objects of comparison. Sometimes we do catch the hillock-like form of a shepherd's hut, in the dark peat moss distance, adding to the sadness by the sense it forces on you of the forlornest insulated existence; pale green or yellow herbage of the quagmires (the hue of toadstools) and cavernous ground, perilous to the stranger's tread, are round it, and only its own little wreath of smoke, mounting blue, breaks the whole dun desolate expanse. The black brown of the peat morasses, and the extensive stagnating of artificial pools, formed by rain, where that fuel has been extracted, and the pitchy liquid pits of the native soil exposed, add almost horror

to the scene. Malkin remarks that a journey of sixty miles in the direction of these mountain-chain *tops*, might be taken almost without gate, road, or human habitation being encountered, from Yspitty Ystwith to Bishop's Castle in Shropshire!

At the most spirit-stirring hour of the day, or most brilliant day of the most vivifying season, all is lifeless and silent, as in dead of night or the deepest of "winter wild." No woods are there to reverberate the axe, to entice the birds to sing in, or exhibit the life of Spring, mounting into bud, leaf, blossom! The scorched brown of the fern in summer, differs little from the red of its dying, in the late autumn; so that a monotonous sameness and sad silence prevails eternally. At the hour and at the season when we know that the hamlet below is resounding with the flail in the barn—the busy anvil of the smith—the wild glee of the village little ones, rushing out of the school—that the fields are full of flowers, and grass and grain waving to the sun, we encounter in this mourning sort of landscape, only the lone bleat of a lamb, or fitful shriek of a bird of prey—the same bleak lakes, each with its little melancholy pall of mist—the same pale or rust-

coloured crags, and dingy pool—the same whistling of winds—the same sickly effort of nature at vegetation. Even the sun itself, that “glorious eye” of heaven, shares the influence of the scene it glorifies in vain, looking to the imaginative wanderer, like a grand but melancholy lamp, its orb every day rolling “from morn to dewy eve,” over so wide an extent of ground, but rolling in vain; warming but barrenness, a waste, as of a sea in dead calm, and as profitless to man.

In the midst, however, of these deformed masses of mountains, there occur defiles, where brooks or larger streams force their way down to the plains; and there Nature, to the relief of the traveller who may follow such waters down, begins to look herself again. Richer vegetation, mossy waterfalls, then hanging timber-trees, begin to make the wild cleft beautiful, till at the sheltered bottom a *real* farm—a patriarchal sort of home of the “mountayne men”—peeps in its almost solemn antiquity of appearance, from among sycamores and oaks; and possibly some yews will mark the site of some humble house of God in the wilderness, and almost hidden by that tree of the grave,—its constant accompaniment.

Having found a single fortunate spot—with

lofty masses of rock, out of the mural fronts of which several large trees grew almost horizontally, near the source of one of these nameless streams, we pitched on its side stripe of sod for the place of our evening meal. Affording us water and trees, and yielding a dim and remote picture, wrapped in purple sunset haze, of some fine country far far down, where a chasm of the hills gave egress to the water, it appeared quite an oasis to us travellers of this Desert of Wales.

“In this very region, somewhere, was the living of our Hermit Vicar situated,” the Rural Doctor observed; “and here I will, gentlemen, over our tea, pursue his story to an end, with your leave.”

All assenting, the Doctor, after a few cups of green tea, as preliminary to the more serious affair of the downright meal, the ham, the eggs, the water-cresses (if possible), the “thick substantial” cream (carried in a stone bottle till it becomes part butter, and said butter luxuriously spread over his own bread, containing potatoe or rye)—I say, after these few consolations of travel, he made a beginning of the end of this long story.

THE HERMIT VICAR.

CHAPTER VI.

I cursed the hour in which she saw him—I cursed him like a fiend—grinding my teeth in an agony that forgot the whole world where she was.—HISTORY OF MATTHEW WALD.

As an introduction to the ensuing narrative, which affords a sequel to the foregoing story, of a powerful passion gaining the mastery over no weak mind, a brief notice is necessary of what occurred at Llysdinam after the death of Mr. Rowlands and Mr. Trevor's departure.

Prior to the latter event, the tutor engaged in their interest a female servant of Miss Rowlands, then married, as a confidential agent in the transmission of letters. For a time their correspondence was securely maintained—Miss Rowlands relating to her lover all the importunity she encountered on the parts of Sir Edward and his son, while she found for a long period a convenient pretext for delay in the respect for her father's memory, which did indeed make delay consonant to her feelings, and postponed the elopement with Mr. Trevor, which was now understood between them as their future step.

Near the time when this step was about to be taken, Mr. Trevor (having often privately visited her,) received a long complimentary letter from the Baronet, complaining of Miss Trevor's resolute rejection of the hand of his son, notwithstanding her previous engagement. It contained a bank note of large amount as a return for Mr. Trevor's excellent mode of educating his niece, but implored his putting the crowning grace to the parental part he had performed, by using all his powerful influence over her mind, to induce her adherence to her early vows.

Mr. Trevor dashed the bribe to the floor, but when he considered that it but sought to engage him to a part wholly consonant with his clerical and Christian character, he felt all the perplexity of the predicament. At last he resolved to send *two* letters by the same post. One to the Baronet (which also returned the present, as not needful to induce him to do his duty,) inclosed a letter for Miss Rowlands, exhorting her to fulfil the engagement she had entered into with the acquiescence and at the desire of her deceased father, to banish any new state of feelings interfering with her duty; in short, such a letter as seemed demanded of him in even courtesy.

To Miss Rowlands' hand *direct*, through their

confidante, he sent a passionate epistle, in which the struggle, to reconcile with his long-inculcated lessons of good faith and lofty morality, the gross duplicity of this double part, must be painfully apparent, even to his young and partial charge. In this, he of course explained that the other letter was for the eye of her uncle merely, though addressed to her; and after much melancholy sophistry, ventured to be somewhat jocose on the extreme zeal with which he had almost commanded his obedient pupil, to forget and reject any *other* object who might have usurped a place in that heart, no longer her own to dispose of. This extreme advocacy of young Rowlands' suit, Mr. Trevor imputed, not untruly, to something of gratitude he could not but feel toward the parties for their liberal presents. Notwithstanding this gratitude, however, Mr. Trevor proceeded to write the fullest directions for Miss Rowlands' elopement, the day of his waiting with the chaise, the house where an aged relative of his was to harbour her, till the "most blessed rite" should be performed.

In his painful apology for his dishonourable part, Mr. Trevor observed, "Do you not remember?—Yes, my darling *pupil* *does* remember, how often, when she was *but* my pupil, I exhorted her to beware evermore, through life,

of the first step! Ah! read *here* now, in these *two* letters to you, (read and pity!) an illustration of my own moral by my own act! *My* first false step, was the making of my little pupil my world; and my existence to depend on rendering it a world of graces and perfections equalling your mind to your person.

“See now, see now, but not with anger—see and pity your tutor caught in his own toils, those spread for *thee*, sweet dove, alas, *another’s* right! How *could* I refuse compliance with their so reasonable request? And was it in human nature to comply *sincerely*? I call Heaven to witness, Madam, that all I have formerly inculcated of the beauty of candour, of the necessity of truth between man and man, of the vileness of duplicity—I practised, I impressed on you, with a self-approving conscience; yes! and let me but enjoy your angel-presence once more, were it but as again my bashful pupil, if that sort of connection *could* exist between us, in this my solitude, without the world’s malice, come to me in your beauty of *mind*, and let your most beautiful body be to me but as an *angel’s*; *but come* and be for ever by my side; read with me, smile to me, Hester, and I could be again all I was once—an upright man—one self-acquitted, unabashed before God and man, as when

I lived with the glorious dead rather than the degenerate living, when my mind fed delicately on the cool fruits of philosophy, and dared to stand, mind to mind, in the points of purity and honour unshamed with the old immortals of Greece or Rome ! Even as I used to regard each in his niche around us in your father's library, as a glorious ghost not without language, not without a dumb solemnity of communion, so I would here, again, with you, a virgin-angel by my side ! And then, oh ! then, my pupil—my *wife* ! *Have* I dared to write that word ? Oh, how it looks ! When I welcome to my roof *thee*—what *their* eternal voice conveyed through mine has made *thee*—with what ardour will we return to our grand, sweet, and pensive company, again, in the intervals of our walks by the mild sunset, or when snows and winter-winds make our very minds shrink up to each other, and find in that confinement such a reverberated glow of delight, as not the landscapes of all countries in one unfolded to us out of doors could afford us ! My *scholar* ! my scholar of the cheek of damask rose and shrinking eye, but masculine mind ! My hope ! my pride ! Then this vile and cruel dilemma of our fate shall be forgotten—I say not *repented* of, for my heart bleeds penitent already. Oh,

yes, while I read my own traitor hand's mad scrawl, in your *other* letter, (stamp on it, spurn it, my sweet !) actually *enjoining* you to devote yourself to the man of your father's choice, my blood recoils, it runs cold ; I shall surely never send the horrid lie against my heart true to death. My very soul misgives me when I look on it ! But it is no more than a formality—the accursed compulsory lie of courtesy, which condemns us to a thousand against our reason. Very soon *we* shall be laughing over it together—God grant it ! God grant it !”

It should seem that Mr. Trevor had received no answer ; or not that speedy one which his impatient anxiety required, to these momentous *two* letters ; for under a date but a few days posterior, fragments of a letter have been preserved, written by him, in which suspense seems almost to rise to agony, and with which this notice of his correspondence must conclude.

“ * * * * * The post-woman is returned, and again ‘*no letter*’—I shall go mad ! I write this, yet dare not send it, for fear that our secret has been disclosed. I dare not set off to you neither, because the very day I am gone, probably the dear longed-for letter will arrive ; perhaps specifying the very *hour* when

I am to come, and the place where, which my journey will prevent my attending to. I shall surely go mad! The day of *my* arrangement for our meeting—(to part no more!)—is already gone by, from your strange conduct in not answering mine, as I implored! Oh, have you ceased to——Indeed, I *am* too old for you! For Heaven's sake tell me the worst; oh tell me, Madam! Better death, despair itself, or forgetful madness, anything than this languishing fever of a life, worse than death, which I am leading, and must lead, till you take pity on me, *and write*. Something surely prevents you, or you *cannot* write! Revenging God! look down on me, and if I *be* indeed writing to the *dead*, strike *me* dead also! If you have indeed waked from your dream of me, to the more natural passion for the young—oh, that fortunate young!—*still* write! It will be the greatest mercy possible, to bid *me* wake also! Insult over my vanity, reproach me for my treachery; no matter how, so you bid me cease to hope, and give me but certainty, all will be mercy. If you have quite lost all love for me, oh! yet preserve so much pity as this; to put me out of my misery—to take me off this rack of suspense!

“Perhaps you are reluctant to stab my heart

with the truth ; of your having learned to love him. But your silence—oh, this death-*silence*, is worse than the worst your dear *living* hand could possibly inflict. Could it write wounds, it would at least remove this mountain from my breast—this horrid idea of my own angel lying white in her shroud ! Horror of death ! it must be so ! Nothing else would have hindered such a pitying creature easing me of this horrid pal-pitation of days on days spent in guessings, groanings, in rages, even against her (to my shame), nothing but death ! death ! death !

“If you think I am happy in this wild lone place, because I once described it with gaiety, why you *was* right—I *was* so ; but the moment I think of it as *my* home only, this quiet becomes horror—this green and pastoral hollow bends dusky round me, into a lonely *hell* ! Oh pardon the irreligious fury of my misery ! Remember how I am cut off from God as well as men, if *you* abandon me *now* ! For now I see my part in darker colours than I could have believed, and my conscience rises against me, and every hope that did whisper harmony to my nerves, dies away dumb, dumb as you are !

“Let me but look on *your* certain superscription, that blessed assurance of your *living* ; and methinks I could now compound even for your

loving no longer. Every letter our shrivelled old post-woman held out to me made her face like an angel's—my ministering angel. Shall I never see her again? Never see that knowing smile more, with which she gave me the heavenly delicate white blessing?

“Oh write! *write*, if you are yet alive, for pity! in mercy! in the name of God, write, and save my senses! Save me from the misery of the mad! Save me!”

* * * *

CHAPTER VII.

“ ‘ These old knights have few to trouble them now with pacing over their graves.’

“ ‘ But here, my friend,’ said I, ‘ is one rather singular—quite by itself—Stop!—Is not this wood that they have laid by way of lid over the marble? You may be sure such a fair tomb must contain something fair—I *must* see it, my friend.’

“ ‘ Ah, sir, I warn you, you will only frighten yourself.’

“ ‘ I leaped back, and cast my eyes upon the old man—‘ Old Man,’ I said, ‘ how is this? Surely I thought there had been rest in the grave!’ ”

HISTORY OF MATTHEW WALD, p. 370.

“WHAT might be the date of the foregoing incidents,” said the Rural Doctor, continuing

his reading, "I have no precise knowledge. From the semi-barbarous state of the medical practice, the gross and suicidal intemperance in one of the Welch gentry, which the narrative describes, one must conclude that it refers to a rather remote æra."

However this may be, it was at a considerable distance of time from that uncertain date that a solitary pedestrian, wandering this very region, came at evening to the brink of a wild and singular hollow of the hills, in which stood a church and parsonage resembling those referred to in the above rough drafts of letters, which, along with others elucidatory of the issue of that love-adventure, were found in a recess (curiously concealed,) of the wall of that parsonage-parlour, many years after their date.

Descending the dingle bank, along a rocky brook's side, he presently stood at a churchyard stile, adjoining which stood the vicarage-house, ruinous and empty, overhung by an enormous yew, which canopied also a great space of the adjacent burial-ground. This latter exhibited the desolation of total abandonment by the living, in addition to that inseparable from the silent "city of the dead."

The church appeared to be disused for regular worship, the main path to the ancient

doorway was so full of weeds, and the few tombstones were almost buried in nettles and docks. But what most struck the traveller's notice, was a handsome tomb of black marble, in that humble place of rest for the humblest dead, where was no other memorial entitled to be called a monument, even of the plainest kind. Led by curiosity to approach it, he found it to be of fine workmanship, supporting a small urn of yet more elegant execution. The site of this tomb was also extraordinary, being on the northern side, or what is popularly termed the *back* of the church, avoided by rustic superstition for Christian sepulture. No kind of inscription recorded who slept below, even by initials. By a singular plan of building, one side of the vault-roof was made to join the gable-end of the parsonage-house, taking in a small rivulet that divided the house-wall from one precipitous side of the churchyard, and which, thus imprisoned with its narrow rocky ditch or channel, and still gurgling on below, where the shallowest crevice left at the bottom of the masonry allowed it passage, sent up a strange and almost appalling sound (resembling a dying voice stopped in the throat), to the loiterer above, leaning on the flat top of

the vault, pensively thoughtful, and almost aghast at the sudden scene of mortality presented.

Turning to seek some asylum for the night, he was startled by a venerable, though rustic figure, standing close behind, whose approach over the deep vegetation had been almost soundless, the more from age rendering his footfall slow and measured. His hair was white as snow; his hose blue woollen, and extending above knee; his home-spun coat of grey of the most antique cut; he leaned on a long staff, that seemed to have been his crook in his long past able-bodied days; and over the button of his deep-flapped waistcoat, he bore suspended a bunch of rusty keys. This old man proved to be the former clerk (long superannuated) of this church. He came to invite the stranger to an inspection of the "Haunted House."

"What haunted house?" enquired the traveller. "Fy Annywl!" the old man exclaimed, "why, I did think that every man, woman, and child in this country, did well know what we do call the haunted house! There it be." And so saying, he led the stranger round to the entrance porch. A grandchild now followed the

old man to give him the rude *candle* of this district—a long greased pith of rush fixed in a small iron vice; this done, ran away in fear. The decrepid guide made his follower remark a very strong lock fixed on each of two doors that divided one end of that long low house from the other. “Aye, God rest his soul,” the old man quavered, “he did strangely fear a living body’s ever coming where he did abide; the old dame who did come in but once a day to set him his bread and milk (all he did eat ever) must not ever pass this first door—here she did set it down for him outside, and creep away tip-toe, holding her peace, and—I’ll warrant—her breath, too, for awe of him—for all he was a living man, as of a ghost——”

“Of whom are you speaking?” the stranger inquired.

“Of who, but our Hermit Vicar, do I speak? You *must* know all about the Hermit Vicar? Aye, aye, you do know right well, a *Sais* (Saxon) though you be. You be not come thus far into our land, and not heard of our man of despair—peace to his soul! You have heard of the mourning Vicar of our poor place, who did live twenty and nine years alone, and never speaking, but to his God?”

As they entered the innermost room, the stranger was surprised to hear a bat whizzing there, which extinguished the light in that instant.

It was but one glance that he had time to cast on this dismal apartment. "Good God!" he exclaimed. His imagination had leisure to fill up, in the dark thus suddenly produced, the mournful or terrible outline of that momentary view. Meanwhile, the sound of more than one bat, and the swift whizz of their leathern wings, close, gave strange novelty to the situation.

"Anon, you shall see what be around you," said the old man—"I must try to make my great-grandchild hear me call up through the Stranger's Vault to get us another rush," and he began calling "Margaret!" but he sounded as if strangely distant, and that there was some outlet into another room or recess, where he had advanced. "What is that quivering light, like a feeble star, I see," asked the stranger, "that looks so far off? and what is this earthy smell? and how is it we hear that gurgle of some water so hollowly yet so plain, *indoors* here? Is'nt that the same brook that runs by the church yard end, what I heard beneath me, when I stood by the black tablet and tomb outside?"

“Why it be that little light I am groping to reach—if I can, God help me, that am seventy and eight upon ten years old* come Hallow-tide. It is only the fine sunset out o’ doors, that you do see, which peeps in through a chink in the Stranger’s Vault, and so in to the deep bed of the *prill*, (brook) and so in here glimmer, glimmer, through the hole in this parlour’s wall. For this parlour and that vault are in one, by a hole he did make in the stone wall between, that the dead and living might meet, God bless every body! His poor hand was clutched on one of the square stones, poor soul! which he had torn down long years before, to go in and out to the wormy dead! I was one of those who broke open the two doors, and found him dead, dead for three days,—and it was I who unclutched his hand (as white as the pressed curd, it was so bloodless!) from off that last stone, he had died while refitting into the wall. If it had’nt been his strength failed him, he might have shut up the great hole quite and clean, and we might never have known where he did make his abiding place.”

“Why this room, you said he made his

* Eighty-eight. Welsh mode of enumeration in the primitive districts of Wales.

home, did you not?" the stranger asked. The old voice (for the speaker was still invisible,) answered, "But his bed—where is it? You shall not see it here; nor his oaken table, nor his stool, nor his rush, nor any one mark of one spending his twenty-nine black years *here*! No, no! You must peep through yonder hole where that one stone of the masonry I told ye of is awanting, hole enough with the other loose ones to let a body through, which you'll see presently, plain enough, to have been replaced by his own trembling hand, when he found himself sick, and in extremity—Marg'ret!—and through that one stone's empty place, you shall see what was all his bed, you shall see the small bowl he drunk his last meal out of *there*! his overturned stool lying *there*!—his prayer book open at the service for the dead *there*!"

It was long before the child answered down through the chink in the vault to the old man's call, eclipsing that little gloomy light a moment, as she applied her lips to it, which in the next, again twinkled through the damp and dark of that apartment, without dispelling either, completing the funereal illusion by its semblance of a sickly small vault-lamp, dying

out. The following was the substance of the old clerk's confused account of this singular incumbent, whose own appearance with reeling intellect, and body tottering on the brink of the grave, gave yet solemn effect to this extraordinary incident in the life of a traveller.

The Hermit Vicar—(not then become known to the country under that epithet) came to that living, about the mid period of life, or beyond, but he was handsome, of graceful person, and such courteous manners and generous as well as benignant conduct towards his parishioners, as to win all hearts. Yet restless and melancholy, and for ever sending after letters to the distant post-house—this (as the messenger was old and slow) being the only occasion on which he ever swerved from that mild and patient placidity which so gracefully distinguished him.

Very soon after, an aunt dying bequeathed him an ample fortune. His flock shared the benefit of his acquisition, for he promised to make their debts of tithe almost nominal only, yet it was observed by the shrewd simplicity of those rustic folk, that the letter announcing this stroke of fortune, did not brighten their pensive pastor's looks with half the glee that did the receipt of one of those elegantly folded

little letters, although those latter came frequently.

At last, after an incident which, though somewhat remarkable in such a lone place, the grey chronicler did not seem to connect but by way of conjecture with the vicar's after state, he was missing one Sunday from his duty, and there was no service. Yet a strange suspicion existed in the few parishioners that their (till then) punctual pastor was no further than within the walls of his own parsonage. On the following Sabbath day, a stranger who had invested himself with the surplice, without the usual aid of the clerk's hand, walked up the aisle—a white-headed man.

But the child having at this stage of the cottager's narrative come to the passage end, he broke it off, and did not conclude till after his return, when a solemn feeling checked for some time all speech in both. On the dim rush revealing to them the shadowed and grim apartment—an appalling spectacle, exhibiting the effects of Decay and Time, when unresisted by light, and ventilation, and human presence. The floor was soft with depth of dust; books of beautiful binding, stood formally, as if in use, on two sides, but all over blue-green mould, and

yellow funguses hung sprouted from the gilded calf-skin, through which, even yet, some traces of that tarnished gold were visible. A once-gay paper, half clung to, half lay fallen in huge rolls from the crumbling walls, and where these were thus denuded, a monstrous crop of pendulous toadstools, of a black colour, differing wholly from those on the books, almost covered the exposed rough stonework.

Enormous cobwebs, to which the long accumulation of dust, probably even during the Vicar's abode there—had given the actual colour and the seeming fabric of black cloth, hung all the room with a terrible kind of mourning, voluminous as that suspended in scarcely less ample folds round a chamber where some illustrious departed lies in state, as if in mockery (perhaps angry heaven's retributive mockery)—of that far different sort of arras, with which the tenant had once in his high hopefulness of heart, tapestried that singular room—he who was therein to turn his life into a long dying, and at last there die, broken-hearted! It might be, that he encouraged the increase of this black and dreadful pomp of a “mourning” not made with hands, but growing out of the usurpation of the insect obnoxious to man, in

its lonely loathsomeness. But not all this ruin, thus standing in its shocking fixedness undisturbed so long, so affected the traveller, as the single peep he took through that aperture in the wall, in that part where the replaced stones, excepting one, yet shewed their looseness. Doubtless he saw all within the vault, which his conductor had specified—the bowl, the overturned rude seat, the rotting book; what *more* he saw, his sudden violent recoil better told than any record he could leave, or any remark he could have uttered at the moment. He entered not the terrible place, for not a soul had presumed to remove those loosened stones which a dying hand had so anxiously replaced, leaving them there, like a written prohibition, to convey his vehement desire to guard the dead within, (now in the osseous white ghastliness of the last pure and almost imperishable stage of mortal resolution to first elements) left like a motto to express—“To keep this skeleton-bride of mine—ever Death’s and mine only—to block out human intruders on our dusty marriage-bed—to keep *these curtains* of a bridal such as *our’s*, undrawn till the red morning of the Judgment—I, the breathing dead, expended my very last of life’s

strength, in vain. Respect the fierce desire dictated by Love-madness, which cruel Death would not respect, and enter not! Replace *for* me that last stone I died in raising, and *depart*; or enter with my dying, my everlasting curse!" Such speech had those stones.

Curiosity forbade the traveller to obey strictly this implied prohibition, but he confined his sacrilege to that single look through the aperture. "Good God!" was his sole, often repeated effusion of a hundred mingling emotions.

"And whose was this grave, this *stranger's* grave?" he inquired at last. But the old man had nothing certain to tell, but that it *was* a stranger's—one who had fallen sick, and died at a lone cottage, up among the mountains, being visited by the Vicar prior to his seclusion, and buried by him; that vault also having been raised over the remains by him. Of the many tales this event gave rise to, the charitable old man professed to believe none against his beloved Vicar, whose clerk he had been.

"Well," at last he pursued his tale, "this stranger with a head as white as the driven snow did walk up our aisle. As I looked, and peeped up as it were under his face, which hung

down upon his breast, to see who it might be, I could see a great trembling upon him as he sat foot on the desk's step, and when he raised his face there to begin—Lord! what a hollow noise of many smothered groanings of the men, and the next minute, of sobs from the women, was there, to find that it was really our own good and kind Vicar, whose head had been black as raven feather, all turned so in a fortnight! *he* his own self, turned all so grey, and how deadly pale! for his lips were like a corpse, and he bowed tottering over the ground as he walked. He surely heard; for at that sound he stopped—passed his surplice sleeve across his eyes, and we could catch the smothered sound of his sobbing, in answer, as 'twere, to their kind trouble for his sake.

“But what was his look then to what it did grow after? Every week, on Sunday, did he come stepping slow over the few graves to the church, to *pray* with us, poor soul, but not *to preach*—no—it did seem he would—or he *dared*—only pray—not teach—(another person always did all other duty)—and every week I could see him wither away, as it were, more and more. His eyes grew more deep in their holes, and his face yellower, just like the leaves in

autumn, and his cheek-bones stared more and more, till his poor cheeks became two pits, that he looked like a man famishing, and his face as a scull's! and truly, some cruel misery of heart would not let him eat. And then he grew so shy, and wouldn't look at ye, like some wild man, or mad man, melancholy; and all the while, *here* he was, blink, blink and wink, with his red stiff eyes, *so*,—at the light, while coming out of his week's dusk and dark. Yet *courteous* he was still! kind-like, though he never spoke, but when he had prayed, back he would stalk, (but he stooped like me now, poor soul!) over the few graves again, for shortness, back to his dear darkness—this here key in his hand, with which he would again lock himself in to his week's night—himself and that corpse of some wandering lost thing, whoever that was—life and death in one chamber! I will not dare say *who* that was, for who does know for *surety*, among such poor hill-folks as we? Aye, I think I see now his face deathly white, even to the lips—his beard grown down his breast. I see him just turning to look back *once* to the sweet sun of heaven in its blue, before he entered, but not one minute would he sun himself in its sweet warmth. He would vanish out

of the sight of day like a very ghost!" Such was the history given by the old and garrulous man of the life and death of some victim of despair. Farther elucidation of his narrative is to be found in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

"How mechanically these old wrinkled fingers do their work! Is it *I* that live over again those moments? Is this under the cope of Heaven, or do I dream? Am I not dead and buried, and among all the beings of eternity? Is this life or vision?"—Chap. 29.

"Let me bury my dead! Sit down here by this black casket of my jewels. Why fly? From whom? Do you not see that I am alone in this world?"

MATTHEW WALD, p. 348.

THE pedestrian of the above narrative had long since gone on his way: the aged clerk on *his* also—that of "all flesh." A fresh incumbent had pulled down the "haunted" vicarage; but in the act, a manuscript was discovered in one of those nearly rotted volumes, which rustic superstition, and regard for their extraordinary

owner, had so long left exactly as his hand had arranged them. It seemed to have been the wretched substitute for a human heart; a receptacle for the outpourings of that man of despair, in whom the social instinct still asserted the claims of nature against his unnatural solitude, and living companionship with the dumb Death. It was supposed that he had no design of leaving behind him this, the mere dotage of his misery brooding over the past, but was prevented destroying it by the suddenness of his last illness.

THE HERMIT VICAR'S JOURNAL.

* * * * *

“Anxietas animi continuusque dolor.”—OVID.

“I was bearing in this world an agony of the damned under her silence; and my fears for the fate of my *two* letters to her, (that accursed treachery for which my soul before its

time lies howling!) when I was summoned to officiate at the altar. A carriage had been seen that morning moving along the wild road on the ridge above our valley—an unusual event. The party that needed my services (a wedding group) had left the vehicle at the lonely public house above, on the skirt of the more desolate mountains. The bride, as she advanced to the communion-rail, threw up her veil to look at me with strangely quick action. An animated, a brilliant face was before me. It was Hester's! looking stedfastly in mine, with such an earnestness as if she would look me through, or look me dead; for doubt, desire to pierce some secret, curiosity, triumph, even malignity was there; but alas, not pity! Methought I was under a petrifying fascination, such as serpents exercise on the victim-bird, while death-struck at heart beneath that sweet, familiar, cruel, piercing eye of her's! And she to be the pitiless serpent! God! what was duty? what was duty? what was sacred office? what anything earthly to me? What *would* they be, after I should have read my own very burial service, in that service which yet—*yet*—it was my dreadful *obligation* to perform? What! put her hand in his?

How long I stood I know not—did not know; but a voice—the Baronet's voice—spoke, 'Will you proceed, Sir?' I had not seen him; hardly the bridegroom; nothing but my pale pupil, yet lovelier than ever, till that sound. Oh, the cutting sarcasm of that low demand! of that triumphant smile on the pale penetrating courtly face of that accursed wretch who uttered it! Eternity could not blot it out from this brain but with life. Yet I did begin—a few words—then stopped. Oh, I was beset, beset! Rolling back my eyes from that merciless *old* face, they rested on one young, handsome: that bugbear of my soul for years, 'Ned' Rowlands! Recoiling from that, they met another sneering, yet abashed, a female one—the treacherous wretch, now come as bridesmaid, who had undertaken to manage our correspondence, and was secretly letting all our letters pass through the uncle's hands. *They* cared not about her heart: her hand, for the wealth *that* gave, was all they wanted. O God! had they taken that *all*, and left me that hand! Where could my wretched eyes turn next, but to her's? And still I was stammering and stopping, in some hope of *her* faltering out 'Stop!' till something like rage rose

to keep me from fainting, as there stood my *own* pledged one, as if enjoying my revolting agony ! Who could read *her* expression ? It was not anger, nor pleasure, nor grief, nor despair, nor resignation, but something of a confounding of all these, though I thought, at sight of (I suppose) my dreadful thunder-stricken look, there came some dark groping of suspicious horror to her mind. It gave a new cast to her aspect, for she kept growing deadly pale, as the horrible service went on and on—for oh, conscience cursed me to a selfish coward in that moment ! Oh ! then, what looks, what looks, began, as the horrid ‘Wilt thou have,’ drew near, to be exchanged between us ! What a frightful talk of our well-acquainted eyes, that had not long, scarce two minutes time, to talk, ere even such talk would be vain, would be criminal ! *Now* I understand those looks, too late ! Doubtless my desperate, doating, upbraiding, praying, mad eyes began to prove to her some frightful mistake that she was under. Yes, for my eyes did the office of grovelling knees ; of a bleeding heart, crying her ‘mercy ;’ of tongue beseeching to know my offence ; for she was changed, changed already from that lofty inhuman beauty (as I fan-

ced then) who was come there, to make my own right hand rise murderous against my own heart; make it put into another's hand for ever and for ever, her's, *her* precious, that was mine by a vow registered in heaven, though not on earth. Oh! yes; her countenance *did* change; her lips, white as death, *did* move, ready to arrest our fate. But all then was mystery: I could only judge by her outer action—her *voluntary* act. I saw her drest even with care—oh, hell! studied grace!—a glorious creature of beauty, on that to me Doomsday morning! Then my wrath swelled dreadful, and I almost defied her by my lifted voice and tone I read with; then her eye swum in tears: her *eye*, her faint eye—alas! not her tongue, *did* say ‘Stop!’ It *did*, but even that I disbelieved in the next moment. Oh! but when our hands met—met *once* more—for what a purpose! *then* it became voice! language! languishing horror! *then* it *spoke* indeed, terribly, most mournfully, beyond misconception—‘*Keep my hand! keep it in mercy! it is yours! do not give it to another!*’ And then she staggered; she uttered some word: I swear by God it was *not* ‘I will.’ It was ‘O my dear’—I heard it. But *they* supported her: *they*

chose to hear ‘I will.’ She was incapable of resisting; she was fainting. I was too: all came dark and hushed round me—round *us*. Shame, confusion, recalled me to *my* task, and we looked at one another! It was done: all over! I looked upon a wife! The rest was but voice—mere words, which I sounded like a piece of mechanism.

“Merciful Heaven, as we call thee, where was your mercy then? Nay, wretch that I was, where was my reason, my manhood then, when I put that hand in his? What was duty to me? What had this cursed world more for me, that I should heed its hiss? I should have given her time: I should have spurned duty, every thing: forgot everything—my God himself—in such a moment, for *her*. I should have rushed between my enemy and my good angel, and saved her from her own erring act: I should have mixed wild murder with holy rite, if nothing less would have saved her. O that time could bring back that cursed moment! Then I would be a *man*! Wicked, or wild bloody, but a man! O thou idle page I am blotting in vain, blush blood for my baseness! Could it be—ah! *could* the past return—I swear I would probe that lecherous corner in

his cursed breast where lurked the lust that dared to aspire to *my* dear love, probe it, and reach *it* and his reeling soul together ; and drive both out howling to the pit of wrath, not hotter than the hell I hide in this darkness—in this grave—in this hollow torture-place, my heart ! my heart ! Ah, fool ! to give away thy own delicate, dear, devoted girl with thy own hand to another ! and *now—now*, old, and sick, and mad, with all snow on thy bowed head—to grow valiant now—threaten *now* !

* * * * *

“ Once only, as I saw the last of her white figure retiring through the church door, she turned her head, and looked up the aisle at me, where I stood like a statue, the book still in my hand, in the attitude of still reading.

“ I re-crossed the churchyard among the few simple people of this dingle, for whom the occasion of a gay wedding made a sort of jubilee of half an hour ; nor did one of them detect my emotion, or know that I was even acquainted with the party. A dreadful contrast, their careless happy merriment and gossip, to the black storm burst within *my* hollow heart, raging within my secret soul !

“The sun shone gloriously : my garden with its old yew-tree arbour looked as pleasant, as deeply peaceful as ever, round me, a wretch ! A miserable lifetime, with all its ravages, revolutions of feelings, witherings of hearts, seemed to have passed since I left that arbour. It seemed impossible that so much of ruin and suffering could have been condensed into so small a portion of human existence.”

* * * * *

The explanation of this incident (as afforded more confusedly by the passionate journal) is as follows :—

The uncle having become master of the secret of the lovers' correspondence, through the treachery of their confidant, acted a cautious part—by permitting the Vicar's letters to reach the hand of his niece for a while, till he had caused her to suspect that Mr. Trevor was on the point of marriage with another. Then, when he had cunningly procured his insincere letter to her, exhorting her to fulfil her early contract with her cousin, by a simple expedient he turned the unhappy man's device against himself, by suppressing the duplicate which

was to nullify the other, and to reach her through the usual secret channel, and delivering to her the other alone. *Then* he stopped a succeeding letter, in which the torturing suspense under her silence was so vehemently expressed, while the solitary lover kept writing fresh letters, and burning and writing more, and still not daring to send, as foreboding or dreading their falling into other hands ; a few of these scattered scraps, indicating the pains of a departure from purity and rectitude, remained among other papers of less moment, thrust among the mouldy leaves of the journal.

When Miss Rowlands had recovered a little from the shock, her quick and passionate sensibility and unbridled ardour of temperament, which nothing but the constant influence of love, and that exquisite tenderness her nature was so capable of, had kept subdued into a gentle sweetness, now broke forth; and stung to the soul, by the cool advice of her tutor to give herself up to the misery of a loveless marriage, she no sooner thought a step than she was impatient to take it, nor conceived a mode of stinging him, however feebly, who had thus stung her woman's pride and woman's doating, than it seemed an age till it was adopted.

Miss Rowlands did not even affect to conceal

that her consent *now* given, was wholly in obedience to her late father's wish, seconded by this exhortation of her tutor.

“And none but *he* shall marry me, for that, too, was my dear father's wish!” said the rash impetuous young beauty, though her eyes were red with secret weeping, and the beautiful lip which curled an undisguised scorn of him who was willing to take her without a heart, quivered with some secret anguish, even while thus loftily contemptuous. Her fortune was to her as mere earth,—as the dirty soil by means of which flowers of beauty or glory are to be reared, except as it was to make happy the man she loved, and herself by bestowing it; and, he lost, it became dirt alone, for with him perished the germ of whatever flowers were to strew her path of life, and all that remained was thorns and wilderness. Hence, while feeding her uncle's and cousin's rapacity for her wealth, she felt a sort of reckless wilfulness of self-abandonment, in throwing in, with her gold, her beautiful person thus abandoned, never doubting that the secret of her love, or at least its real object, would go with her to the grave.

Remonstrance against this wild journey and obscure wedding was vain. Even the faithless waiting-woman, still unsuspected, must be the bride's-

maid, or none. Knowing the control she had over their avaricious fears, she grew imperious, and what the journal has wildly recorded, took place.

When stopping to leave the vehicle at the lofty public-house, the cunning waiting-woman prevented Miss Rowlands being alone with the hostess, who indeed could not have undeceived her about Mr. Trevor, as she spoke no English. But on the return of the young lady, now a secured prey, and the purpose effected, she was less vigilant. Several females had been attracted to the humble hostelry, by the novel sight of an elegant carriage and two or three gay saddle-horses there waiting. With one of these women, who understood English, she had no sooner retired than her loquacious companion, on a slight question put respecting the clergyman who had officiated, ran on, in an eulogy of his goodness to the poor, the pity it was his living so solitary, and several other remarks that—combined with Mr. Trevor's whole bearing at the altar—irresistibly forced the conviction on her that she had been deceived by them, and sacrificed by herself, in the rash impetuosity of love-agony, jealousy, and despair.

A strange, dumb, motionless fit of musing

came upon her, giving to her figure the air of a somnambulist, but to her open eye rolling, that stern expression of thought working dreadfully in the dark, mixed with suspicion of a deadly wrong, and hovering enemy, which characterizes the first stage of melancholy madness. But she was not mad, it was but the intense abstraction of an overwhelming passion, blasted at the very moment of its height of hope, which wrought all the outward effects that give something of solemn and even shocking, to the appearance of the sleep-walker.

She answered any question to be rid of the importunity, and moved from one room to another of the humble house when solicited, also, as the shortest means of restoring that silent fixure of person, and private contemplation, which she instantly relapsed into, to the surprise of the females, and of the gentlemen waiting outside the house.

But this species of thunder-stricken apathy and calm, is ever followed by a reaction of fearful activity, as is well known to observers of the pathology of mind. When it was announced to her that the horses were put to, she started most violently, uttering "God bless me!" and looked aroused around her, then down on the ring on her finger, then inquiringly at the faithless at-

tendant, not as if forgetting what had taken place, but to re-assure herself that she had not only dreamed frightfully. "Leave me five or ten minutes, and tell the gentleman I am coming," she said calmly, as quite recovered—and she was obeyed. But on her not appearing for a long time, the woman, returning, found the room empty. A wood-work lattice which had been broken out, left its place of size enough for one to get out, where the steep rising of the ground behind the house, (being indeed the beginning steepness of the whole sterile mountains of the region) allowed footing by an easy drop, to one escaping.

The alarm of this disappearance quickly spread, and it is to be presumed that the bridegroom and his father omitted no means of search; but the region into which the unhappy girl, alone, and ill, and delicately clothed as she was, had thus plunged in desperation, is one of more than common extent for British ground, and of a wildness and desolation hardly inferior to that of any land of any country. A feeble wanderer might, without any accident, suffer death by famine; or a desperate one, who should seek it in one of the many mantling pools overhung by naked melancholy rocks, might go almost undiscovered through the whole process

of the last physical dissolution, floating and dissolving on its surface, its only dirge the whistling of the broad flags and rushes in the constant blowing of the wind, until the skeleton, lightened of the buoyant flesh, should disappear again, sinking like a dismantled wreck's last remnant hulk.

Besides that this region of sterility afforded but few inhabitants to actually go out in search, it is hardly to be believed how curiosity, which in remote but better populated rustic places, becomes keen and active, here, on the contrary, languishes from the eternal monotony of the scene and sluggish occupations of the mountaineer. The watching sheep, or a few cows driven to the greener bits of pasture, watered by some dingy brook in the dead solitude of vast moorlands, (the watcher there buried below the level of even that solitude, at least enlivened by a wider range of clouds and wild distance,) such daily occupation divided from even vegetable life, except some stunted birch, or the contortions of some elder-tree's skeleton boughs, is sufficient to paralyse even the liveliest natural intellect.

Hence, after the first surprise, and a few traversing the heights in fruitless search, in a day or two the matter was almost forgotten;

inquiry was indeed made at the vicarage by a messenger from the Baronet, (who had made perfectly secure his son's right to the fortune of the lost lady,) as suspicious of Mr. Trevor ; but of the country people, those nearer concluded that she had practised a joke on her alarmed friends, and rejoined them somewhere on the way, hard by, while the remoter dwellers who caught the report, ranked it with the hundred other such, which often float wonderful on the wind, and soon burst like bubbles into airy nothing, so that, however in the neighbourhood of Llysdinam, her paternal abode, her disappearance was accounted for, or whatever sensation it caused there, which tradition does not inform us, in this district there remained, after a lapse of hours, more or less, or set and rise of sun, only one real, distracted, desperate searcher or mourner for beauty, youth, and love, homeless and broken-hearted ; he whose sufferings for her was afterwards to acquire for him the strange name in popular story of the " Hermit-Vicar."

That every evening did he, (as we again learn from the wild record of the Journal to be again quoted,) like one wild and mad, rush up the declivities, and stand in the dreadful night of the mountain-top, full of turbaries, and

treacherous of footing. Excavations of some depth, whence the *mawn* or deeper-lodged black peat had been procured, were now become formal-shaped pools by recent heavy rains, but where they were, or what, was not to be detected but by the sudden glimmer of some emerging star under his feet almost; nor was the wounding gorse into which he plunged and was entangled, but by a massive blackness of great parts of the hill breast; or the depth of fern that almost equally barred his way, but by a low moaning and whistling in the wind: for the clouds, though calm, hung bellying over the boundless moor, boundless to his straining eye, which in vain strove to assign a limit to its distance and that of the sky, the former from its mountainous character, curving upward like a mighty wave till it met the bending sky, visible but as a dreadful shade from its low clouds; and where they together shut up the distance, none could say where ended the brown horror of the pathless peat-mountain, with its black gorse and its ruins of rock, and where began the scarcely more inaccessible overhanging sky. And in such a scene was his pupil, his mistress, she whose strange flight almost persuaded him that her *heart* was not even yet gone from him, she, the delicate, was there wandering, shiver-

ing, somewhere like him, *if alive!* He stood by one of these dismal pools now quite exhausted, and strained his eyes, till he saw in every whiter grey rock-stone peeping there, a white face of the drowned; in the streaming of trailing weeds or moss around it, that beautiful hair which had often come glossy over their book as they read, with almost touching cheek; when he almost preferred that interruption to that reading, to the removal of the sweet object, were it not that a still sweeter, a hand delicate as a cherub-wing's down, and the graceful action and love-conscious smile of eye, was substituted, when she threw it back.

After describing this fruitless search in vivid language, but with the utmost wildness, in his Journal, the writer thus records, (or rather raves on paper over) the termination of his love-adventure:

* * * * *

“There had been alternations of sunshine and of dark—I know not how many, but there had been some—when a small shepherd-boy off the mountains brought a message that I was desired to come and pray by a dying person at a certain hovel he described, and of which I knew the situation. He would deliver the re-

quest but to me, and having delivered, he ran off with precipitation, as if warned not to await any questions. This call was not out of the course of usual occurrences in my clerical capacity, yet now it seemed pregnant with mysterious relation to the subject of my every thought.

“Through that dismal scene of my late frantic and fruitless search, my way now led me, the close of day very near; but I no longer regarded night-fall as drear, or the quagmire perilous. The way was hindering though not very long, and the moon had risen and hung over the melancholy mountains as I reached the little lonely abode, overhung by a slate-rock of lurid hue, and built down in a gulley excavated at its foot, by a dingy brook that had worn its own channel in the shattered and loose stone and soil.

“No sick person was lying there, none had been there—the poor wife of the tenant, a labourer who was obliged to go for employment, far from his wild desert home, was there alone, and terrified by the omen, believed herself the person who should soon need my prayers. Besides this, she talked, I don’t know what, of having met at night-fall, when ‘the cloud was on the hill’ too, the *Cyoerath*, the

dreadful Woman of Death that throws up her arms and cries, ‘Oh, my wife!’ or, ‘Oh, my husband!’ And though this poor creature had not heard that cry, she declared she had seen the frightful woman of the grave in that darkness and mist; had surely seen her arms stretched up to heaven, ‘plain as I see you now,’ said she, ‘and it can mean nothing but that some one is to die in this house, my good man or me, and who will then be my children’s mother? Welladay!’ And even this was a disappointment. I learned now, that I had been hoping—a miserable hope!—that *Hester* was that sick or dying person.

“There was a mystery—but it mattered not, since she was not that person. ‘Why should I return,’ I said, as I retraced my steps—‘what have I to return to? That fatal church, that horrid mockery of a home? Why go a step further? Wherever’s earth or water to hide, bird or beast to remove out of heaven’s sight and man’s, the nuisance of this despised body, *there’s* my home! Even here!’ and I threw myself at my length on the spongy ground, and longed, but could not pray, to die. Lying thus, my face buried in my hands, I fancied a sound of some low sobbing in my ear, looked up, and it *was* she!—she just re-

erecting herself from stooping over me—how long she had so bent I knew not.

“Drooping, death-pale, her dress all stained with the soil of the peaty ground where she had lain about, or fallen, in roaming betwixt hut and hut—altered as her shadow from that glorious creature which had so lately stood at my altar—yet she *lived*! That blessed assurance heaved a mountain off my breast. I breathed again—I leaped to my feet, and was in act to snatch her to my bosom, when the remembrance of her being a wife, and by her own act, struck my passion like the cold death!—turned herself into an ugly, a loathsome horror! I stopped and averted my head. Did I rejoice now that she lived? Lord God! what is man, when the passions which Thou hast stored in his heart’s hollow as a mine under a doomed city, take fire and wage thundering war with his nature in its torn vault? Just now it had been almost mercy enough for me to have known she lived—but *now*, knowing that, I remembered that she lived for another, and a horrid joy almost usurped that first joy’s place that that life was in my power, here alone, and with but that dumb moon’s red eye looking down, I could prevent her ever being another’s, though never *mine*.

“‘ Oh, Sir, had you fallen? Was you ill? I was bending over you *so* long!’

“I heard that voice,—that voice again! But some proud devil was in my heart, and made that very voice with its sweetness exasperate me, whispering that pity only gave that touching softness to her tone toward me who *had* possessed her love; and would still possess, or kill, or die, or both.

“And now finding I would not speak, and turned away from her, I heard again her suppressed sobbing; and that too but infuriated me more, for it made me longing mad to comfort her, to fold her to my forbidden breast—and since I must not, by the vows she had taken, that insufferable pain, of *her* causing, cried for revenge, and my heart actually hardened against her the more her’s melted toward me. ‘ Oh, *but* speak to tell me if you are ill, Sir—ill in this wild place? Oh, Heaven!’ Wretch that I was! fury only answered to her love. ‘ Ill?’ I cried, ‘ no, madam; strong, strong to live and bear more wrong, more cruelty, more torture yet, for years, if you can invent worse! You did not ask me that when your inhuman cruelty forced me with my own hand to give away *this*—*this* hand for which I had abandoned my duty, my honour, and my

God.' Patient saint! As she stood drooping, she only whispered, 'Not ill then? thank God! A wild place! and your home so far!'

"My home?" I broke out again, with all my bitterness of heart bursting for utterance. '*Wild* place? 'sdeath and hell! Madam, you forget it's *you* that have made the whole world a wild place to *me*! a desolate place; a cursed place! that it's *you* have made that world an *empty* world to *me*! a place in which to curse God and die; and I *have* so cursed, and nothing remains but to die; but that—that curse too is on your head, my soul's sin is on your's. Your's who have so shut me out from that sole refuge, sole home, my despised age could turn to, our Father's that is in heaven. Wild place! this is no more a wild place to me than my house, nor my house than this, nor this black bog half so horrible a grave as that living grave you dare to call *my* home in your bitter irony.' I know not how long I might have raved my rage, when my proud tongue broke loose, but she shivered visibly, and I then first thought what it was to *her*. 'Oh, it is,' I muttered—'it is a wild place to *you*. God only knows why you are here in this hour, and in a place fit only for me, and God's and man's enemy;

but I will yet wait on *you*, Madam, to *your* home, or your inn—mine is everywhere. All is grave, we look on.’

“Strange power of an agonised memory, when there is no more a present, scarcely a future, in our recklessness of utter despair—to live over again that past which has thus swallowed up all our being. Yes! agitated as I was, I could swear, even now, to almost the least words of that tremendous interview—every word, every incident of that night is as imperishably engraven on my ruins of heart—for *there* howls memory—as if on brass or marble. Yet no—’tis *now*, in my wildness of pains and love revived, in these frightful hours, when I fly to paper in my weakness, as to a human dumb listening recipient of my bosom’s overcharge; ’tis *now*, when I rage and roar in thought, as a lion wounded rages to his dumb den of the wilderness, without a hope or thought of help—*now* that they rise, they rise, they glare!—*her* words, *her* looks, my cruel ones, *her* angel ones—there is a ghostliness in an agonised memory! Sounds, words—tones, looks—oh, these sweet shocking apparitions, stealing back on me through this eternal dusk underground, of confounded night and day! I look on them,

hear them in earthy stillness, and by this sickly taper of a rush of the morass—glimmer, glimmer, while all May is above, and my very churchyard is in bloom. I live and love, and rage over and over the self-same eternal tragedy that brought *us* hither. So will I, to the last. Stand vain characters, and confront my conscience as the hand-writing on the wall did an imperial wretch, happier out under the dews of heaven, blessed with madness, than I this wretch of reason! Till death in mercy warn me of my coming end, there shall ye stand, record of a curse! then to the flames! these removed stones back to their secret place—I to my second grave, and *thee*, my treasure, my ghastly dear dreadful treasure! back to that black privacy which desperate love—pardon! Hester in heaven, pardon!—love stronger than Death and all his guard of horrors—has dared to violate!

“Where was I? Have I shewn her dead, dead, dead? No matter—no——. Now I see her as she stands drooping under my storm of love in madness—her beautiful bosom heaving high and quick by the light of that red moon above the mountain mists,—heaving with some dreadful agitation, while she brooded to herself over

my past words, ringing on her almost stupefied sense. At last, erecting her person, as if roused by my injustice, she said,

“ ‘*I inhuman, I cruel? I force you to give away this hand? Why that is true, I confess,*’ and she broke into an hysterical laugh. ‘*I would have no hand but yours to execute my sentence; but who passed that sentence? Oh, Sir! who passed that cruel sentence? who wrote to ———?*’

“ ‘*Oh don’t debase yourself by false pretences,*’ I broke forth, ‘*don’t pretend—you could not take that cursed letter for earnest. I know it was mean in me, treacherous, I own—but you was not deceived by it, Mistress Rowlands! My other letter! The other, the other!*’ I thundered; ‘*shame on such an excuse.*’

“ ‘*Sir, I am not Mrs. Rowlands!*’ she interrupted me, for the first time, in an almost furious voice, though piteously shrill. ‘*Only so far as your words, as this ring you put on my finger, make me one, I am a wife; nothing more! Call me any thing but that—‘Mrs. Rowlands!’ That’s bitter, that was barbarous, my dear—my dear Sir, I would say—No! I’ve roamed from hut to hut, I’ve starved that they should not find me. God’s my witness, that when I was fainting at the church-porch*

because I looked back at you, and saw you standing so shockingly stock-still, with the book still in your hand, and I could not fly to my poor dear Trevor—if his mere hold to stop my falling, did not rouse me at once like a beast's clutch, may Heaven not support me through this night! Trevor! I go to my grave a —— Understand me, pray do, and spare me plainer speech, for pity!’

“Adorable beauty! I could detect the mounting of her modest blood to her ashy cheek, even by that light. And now I found the blessed ease of a few tears.

“‘Ah God!’ she exclaimed, as she detected my weeping, though I turned my head in my pride,—and stepping up close, snatched my hand and bathed it with her tears, and kissed it and pressed it to her bosom, and almost forgot herself even to embracing me.

“‘Dear, *dearest* Trevor, don't weep! Those man's tears kill me, and *I* the cause! I cannot keep my senses if you weep; pray don't!’

“‘Oh Hester, Hester—you must not fool me again. Insufferable riddle of woman's nature, what do you mean? Have n't you of your own accord taken a long journey on purpose to torture me, to make me your husband's

laughing-stock? Haven't you by your own willing act and deed ———— '

" 'Willing? Heaven send me patience! *willing?* '

"All was mystery to me then. 'Ay,' I vociferated, 'you'd studied your toilet, Madam, I'll swear; I never in my life saw you look lovelier. You walked quick and strong up to the altar—nobody dragged you—your lively eyes flashed at me like diamonds!—by Heaven, they smiled at me, while they looked my heart dead within me. Was *this* compulsion, oh, Hester! was this —— '

" 'Oh no!' said she, wringing her hands, 'it was madness, it was raging jealousy, I don't know *what* it was, but I know my heart was breaking.—Yes, I *did* study my dress! but it was all for *you*, all for *you*, not to please you but vex you; to show that your despised pupil, your poor childish charge, that you treated as a child and disposed of, heart and all, could be a showy woman, a spirited woman, and resent like a very woman—perhaps *die* like more than a woman! "

" 'What!' I cried out, 'were your thoughts thus running on what *I* might think of your bridal beauty, *then*? Oh, Hester, speak truth—explain! '

“ ‘ *I explain to you, Sir ? Did not you, you who have so talked, so wrote, so planned for our two lives being spent together ; oh, Sir ! can you pretend to forget the fatal letter, under your certain hand and seal, commanding me—your wish was always a command, you know, to me—wishing me to think no more of those sweet times, those blessed hopes ? I cannot forget ! Nor how I trembled before I opened it, because I expected it to appoint the very time of our meeting—not to part again ! oh, blessed hour ! to get leave from Heaven to live under your roof, and never leave your side more—to sink upon your bosom—to——Why need I blush now ? It’s all past now !—nor how I kissed it and dared not open it hardly, yet was so glad for all I shook so—opened it, and read—my death-warrant ! Oh, Trevor, Trevor ! ’*

“ ‘ But, Hester ! but, Madam ! Remember the *other* letter. I sent by the very same post, my whole full heart and fullest directions about —— ’

“ It was in vain that I interposed—the feelings of years, of her fresh first morning feelings, condensed into this hysteric passion of a few minutes, burst in one irrepressible torrent of tender upbraiding, tender memories, despair overpowering all bashfulness.

“ ‘ Oh, how *could* you have the *heart* to do it ! ’ she ran on, wringing her pallid hands. ‘ Oh, how *could* you so forget all that had been between us two ! Oh the years that I was by your side, the delicious springs we spent, the happy winter evenings, the heavenly summer sunsets that we watched *together*. When I watched your face in that fine fading light, and you never knew I watched, when I looked up by twilight into your eyes, and you never detected me ! Oh, the long smothered pain I felt because I feared I was too much a child in your eyes for you to love—you so feeling, so watchful of me, so kind to keep me company, so delicate, so different from every body else, among nasty, drinking, coarse men ! All night long, how I used to cry with thinking how near the time was that you would be saying, ‘ My part is done, farewell, Hester,’ not ‘ *my dear*, ’ I was already grown out of that—or only ‘ Adieu, Madam,’—*Madam*, as you’re calling me this night—over and over I used to act all that shocking parting, all by my sad silly self ; and after all this was got over, and you *could* love me, and I was *not* to pine out my life apart from you—oh, then what a time ! When I was left with those two haughty men—homesick for *your* home, heartsick for your com-

pany, harassed with *theirs*, the formal, the interested—ready to fly to you, before you bade me or I knew where, almost—at least you might have come and been near me when you struck the blow—*told* me to die, not written it! Was it not like to strike me dead or mad? It did almost!—You might have imagined what a poor forlorn girl must suffer when *you*, who had led her almost her life long, by this hand, —and who she thought should so lead her till her dying day, —flung it from you, flung it from you *for ever!*'

"Exhausted and melting, though thus miserable, she let that hand, with its fatal *fetter*, (which *I* had placed on it!) drop as if dead by her side, in the simple gesticulated eloquence of nature, and her head declined till her chin rested on her restless bosom in its rapid rise and fall.

"The long deferred explanation was complete at last. What words, what weepings, what struggles of heart and duty, what horrid luxury of despairing love just come back in full force, but to doat and die, were ours, then by ourselves among the dusky mountains, and under the cloud of night! On, hand of a man-ghost, on! wretched instrument of mourning memory, madness of heart, and furious despair! On, heart-surviving brokenness and

death, in your horrible rehearsal, on with our part!—leap, as you did then, once more, even in all that despair, when assured that that most beautiful martyred heart was *not* a false one—though divorced from you for ever, *could* not turn to another!

“Oh, no, *I* got no other letter,” said she, “only that cold, cold, shocking one!”

“Speak that again, my life, my soul!” I cried madly, “but enough! now I see it all!” Yes, then I *did* see all!—their hellish plot burst upon me like a black wood of wild beasts by one lightning-flash, as she spoke. “They kept from you my *other* letter! Oh, my blindness! my detested arts!—caught in my own toils! But come, come, come to my heart again, *back* to its brokenness, my *wife*! Don’t shrink from me my white saviour—this is Heaven, or pleasure as pure—oh, we’ll be happy yet! not God, but the treachery of hell has divided us! There are other lands—another name shall—I’ll have law—vengeance! bloody vengeance! you’re my *own*, who shall take you from me? My own sweet companion in life, in death, on earth, in earth, in eternity! I live again!”

Alas! my more than good angel did not forget that we were lost, though I did. Yet, yet, Heaven make me thankful! In that one

forgetful moment, that exquisite bosom did heave high and close against this. I *felt* the quick beat of that—ah, God! that short-lived heart! I felt the white blessing of those arms around my neck; Heaven's mercy allowed me almost the luxury of a whole wedded life in a minute, while necessity connived at passion, so that I upheld her as she hung by those arms, too agitated else to stand, and her lips, (in but *half-consciousness* I fear,) returned the pressure of mine! a rapture of reconciliation that despair itself but heightened, and worth, almost, the long agony behind!

Too soon her pure-minded honour recollected itself, and she recoiled, and stood dumb and drooping, but quickly said,

“And *do* you forgive me? And from your heart and soul? And bear to think of me, as your poor, silly, passionate pupil again, and not a false cruel woman? Yes, your look, your tone now tells me so. Then I've nothing more to hope for in this unhappy world!”

“Not hope!” I exclaimed, “sit on this tuft of heath, while I run to the woman's cottage for some refreshment, secure you a night's rest there, and by morning I will have planned some escape for us out of these toils of hell we've fallen into.”

She begged me not to leave her yet, she

‘needed nothing;’ and now her whole deportment and even her voice changed, till both became self-possessed, calm, and almost cheerful.

“You have seen me weak, indeed, Mr. Trevor,” she resumed, “I’ve become a child again, I think, since I’ve been living alone—I mean without you. I wasn’t always so forward, so rash, was I? But as you have seen me acting the woman for the first time so ill, so fatally ill, I must strive to appear in something like the character of the woman that *you* once thought worthy of you, that I may not forfeit your tender remembrance of me; as I have your love, home, everything but your pity!”

“Remembrance!” I re-echoed the word, and a trembling fell on me, and I insisted on her returning with me to the parsonage, where my old clerk’s wife would help to restore her exhausted strength by her attention. She did not directly refuse, but assumed the manner of a perfectly cool though solemn comforter towards me.

“It is my turn now,” said she, forcing a faint smile, “to tutor my dear tutor; to save him from the ruin which his too much tender-

ness for a weak rash girl would bring upon him. No, sir! though perhaps I might yet incline to dare the world's wrath and just contempt for your dear sake, by living with you, or flying with you, I cannot bear to bring it down on *your* head, to bring infamy into your innocent home, shame upon your sacred calling. Oh, what a return would that be for the loving care you have taken of my childhood, the pains you have taken with my mind, the trembling watch you have kept over my person, my health, my happiness !'

"And was it to be all in vain? Oh, will you leave me, and be——" I strove to speak more, but could not.

"*Not* his! not another's, don't fear that! *His* home? Never, never, never!" she cried passionately.

"Then how?" I asked, "what home? Whose arms, my poor orphan girl? whose bosom on earth besides is there to open to you? Yes! you will leave me here *alone* :—but if you do—hear me swear, I die! I die! I swear it—I have sworn it, and this right hand shall make good my oath!"

She wrung her hands and writhed her whole person in piteous agony. Suddenly she ad-

vanced nearer to me, she took my hand, she even smiled—my pretty pupil's own smile again! sweetened by the mellow moonlight.

“Does my ‘master’ remember the grave care he always used to take of his silly pupil's toys, and little valuables? You would search an hour after my lost painting-brush, and nurse my sick kitten, and guard my canary bird, as if every plaything of mine was worth your most serious care.”

“Most true, dearest creature!—oh, I *did* prize them, but what of that, now?”

“And *why* did you?” she continued, “why, but because they were mine, and *I* prized them? And why do you not believe *your life* is more precious to me than those? Oh, if you had known the sleepless nights I spent in weeping when you was ill and was in danger, you would know how precious it is to me! Had I but a bird, a pet lamb, any living thing I loved much, while alive, would you not keep it for my sake when I was dead, and nurse it and guard it for me when I could no longer? I am sure you would!”

So saying, she knelt down, and kissing my hand while she held it, preventing my raising her, cried out most passionately, “*Swear* you will guard it, then! swear you will preserve

that dear life as you would such poor toy, whenever I am dead! Swear that, let God take *me* when He may, *you* will wait his appointed time! Revoke that terrible threat against your life! Swear by Him who hears us, I implore it, my dearest Trevor! Swear! It will make me so happy! so happy if I live, so easy if I die. Swear!"

Wretch that I was! I swore. Yet, how could man with a man's heart refuse? She repeated a form, she imposed it with the solemnity of the holiest sacrament, pulling out of her bosom a little prayer-book, her solace, innocent soul! in the sad solitudes where she had buried herself, speaking in a firm yet sepulchral sort of voice, softly and hollowly.

Just as my lips were lifted from the book, she surprised me by advancing her sweet mouth towards mine, by a modest and holy kiss—and she smiled her thanks—*thanks* for my taking that selfish oath! yes, and spoke them too, with all fervency that she could have done, had her own life been the boon granted!

"Oh, Hester, why this oath to-night, why this anxiety now? Do you feel very ill then?" I said. She shuddered, and wept bitterly. "In perfect health *now*," she faltered, "but—oh, Sir, are not my moments numbered, as if I

were sick to death? Indeed, indeed, your poor penitent pupil tells you you *must* not *hope*! For *me*, on my account, I mean—a burial service from your dear lips—a grave in your path, and the name nightly of a poor rash but *faithful* girl in your bedside prayer, is all the hope left me now—but *that's* something! I've had higher, warmer—but hardly sweeter, believe me! Why, need I blush now? Yes, life with you, and your little live cherub in my lap—oh, Trevor! you will not think me immodest soon, if you do now—*those* and *these*!”

“These what? my angel!”

“Oh, I had lost myself—entranced—no matter—winding sheet! coffin! heavy earth! clammy worms! oh, I'm weak, indeed; rosy cheek, lips, little hand, and corruption, corruption! Oh, God, strengthen me, this trial is so bitter, and I am so weak, and this hand within mine, so that I never longed more to live!—yet—and *yet* again! Comfort, comfort it is, that all belonging to my short life and early death, whatever I am, and whatever I may be by Mercy hereafter—will have been all from *you*! all from your instruction! all from your prayers. They tell of little urns holding the ashes of a whole human creature, so as almost to lie in a bosom—but this *is* weak—yet lie *by* me, Trevor! for you *must* die—long hence, God send!—watch my grave, and

at last lie by me ! Was you not called to pray by a sick person up here ?”

Now I learned that it was she who had sent for me, earnestly longing to see me again, but too careful of my reputation to be seen down at my habitation. I had, however, been quicker in coming than she believed possible, so that she did not reach the cottage till after my visit.

“I have procured a night’s lodging there,” said she, “and find I frightened the poor creature last night in the mist on the mountain before the moon rose ; for I saw, while my hands were lifted in praying, some figure moving towards me in the thick fog, that ran screaming away.”

We were passing a shallow pool or swamp ; a dark blue rock rose by it, and in its moonlight shadow one of those shapeless slabs of stone, that rise alone with flat tops, like solitary rude altars in these solitudes. And on this she begged to rest awhile, and alone. She remained rather long ; and spoke not a word after rejoining me, until we nearly reached the hovel, whither she led the way. She would not allow my proceeding to the door with her : and now she spoke, but her voice was somehow altered—her manner yet more solemn—and she trembled almost to falling. She pulled off that fatal ring. “There,” she said, casting it into the

peat pit's water, "let me do this in your sight, for I *cannot* fulfil the obligation that imposes—if spite of my disgust I *could* live with him, I must still be a foul adultress in my affections, as a wife in heart and faith to you; and could I, in spite of law, live with you, alas! I must be the same spotted unworthy thing, as a wife by vows to him—and I hope Heaven will pardon my act of thus making *you* my soul's, my *soul's* dear husband—alas! 'tis not for long!—instead of him, since only in that heaven you ever can be your Hester's."

"As by a treachery of hell they have divided us, the Lord reward them with its torments and its woes, with its weeping and gnashing of teeth, with its tossings on a bed of fire, such as they have made of mine!" I broke out in an agony, as I suddenly saw more fully what her clear mind of honour had seen all the while.

"Oh, for God's sake!—you disturb—you *don't* know." Wretch that I was! *had* I known! "Oh, I have prayed for them,—do *you*, my Trevor?" But I was mad, and knelt down, and struck the earth with my palms, as I would tear myself a grave, or devote those men to some infernal god or power under the earth, crying out, "I do but imprecate on their hearts and souls what they have brought already

on mine, and thine my saint! *Your* despair be on their heads! *My* blasphemy be on their souls! Horror and heart-brokenness, madness and misery unbearable, and eternal partings, desires and love-longings, as fierce and as impracticable as mine, all, all fall on them like wild beasts, to tear 'em before I rise up from cursing them, on this my mother Earth's hard bosom! God the revenger! not for *me*, a wretch, but this martyr, an angel—I cry revenge! revenge her breaking heart," I went on raving. "Oh! if there be in either of their hearts and souls, a thing cherished as I have cherished *this*, smite it before their eyes, tear it from their bleeding hearts, wrench it from their souls!"

My love's despair made me cruel. She wept, soothed, supplicated. I rose, and said, "If I must not curse them, then, ease this breast! Swear *you* in your turn to live—live somewhere—and for *me*!"

"Trevor, I cannot! I cannot, Trevor. In mercy let all be peace but for a little. The time's short."

I was abashed, and implored her pardon. "I have a request," she said, in a hurrying manner, "I have left my prayer book on that rock table by the pool—pray go for it, while I enter the house—there's a little paper in it—read it—it's light enough—*then* come to me"—and she put on my finger her mother's mourning

ring, taken from her own. "In Heaven we shall meet, my mother ! and I want no more a remembrancer," said she, raising her fine eyes above, "and *till* then I *must* forget you—no more need of this ; permit I place it where my soul's treasure on earth is !" Then, looking at me again, she pursued. "Let this be marriage, dearest, between your soul and my soul, as true, as tender, as binding, (though *not on this hand of yours, remember*)"—and as she pressed it, one tear fell on it, "as if holy church had joined our hands also ! Kiss me, *husband*."

"With my soul and heart, as with these lips," I cried.

"Now I am Hester Trevor. Soul of my dear mother ! soul of my dear father ! frown at me, call me perjured when I reach you, if I do not love and honour him,—to obey, alas ! that's past. One kiss more, you'll not think me bold long. My dearest life, good night ; my love, good night. *Remember your vow*—remember me kneeling to you till you took that oath this night—remember your Hester Trevor."

What possessed me ? It was if I was in a mournful vision, and as silence, deep silence followed the stopping of that voice, that was like some sweet-toned passing bell ; it struck me as if some one should hear a tongue tell him in dead night that every friend he has on

earth is at that moment dying, and all be dumb dead of night again.

She glided from me, while I leaned on a dead tree trunk, stupefied. I saw, however, that she entered the hovel—then I obeyed her request.

Lain on the block of granite, I found the book,—the paper within it. Ah, God ! methinks I am reading it this moment.

“As ever you prayed for God’s support, dearest, pray for it before reading further, I conjure you.

“*Have* you prayed ? I leave a space again—pray !

“You will never see me more alive. My dear Trevor must not see me die. It’s too much for his tender heart to bear. God knows it’s like my putting away my salvation, like asking my God to abandon me in such a moment:—yet I must—I will—I do, thus forego the blessings of your dear arms to die in, your lips to receive my soul ! Ever since I gave my consent to marry I have carried a poison, for I had wild and despairing thoughts. They told me, who procured it for me, that it kills slow and without pain. I have taken it *this moment*. Farewell !”

I know that I fainted on reading this, but what happened then—whether from not having slept for nights and days past, that complete syncope changed into a death-like sleep of some duration, or I had recovered my power to rise, and not my reason to reach the hut, God knows:—I only know that when I did reach, there must have been a frightful interval of time.

There was already a grey glimmer of morning in the east. I rushed past a child or two at the house-end. There was no one in-doors—only the light of dying embers from the hearth. I cried out her name desperately again and again—nothing answered but a cricket. I could see that she was not on the bed within the little inner room, divided only by a wattled partition of boughs, allowing a dim glimmer through, from the hearth. I rushed out, asking the child that still peeped from outside through the door, for the lady, “Where is the lady?” His “mother was gone to fetch some one.”—“The lady!” I reiterated. The child pointed indoors.—“No!” I cried to the stupid child; yet he seemed intelligent, and pointed still. Once more I rushed within.—She was *not* on that bed, but groping round, past the foot of another bed, and the hanging clothes

and other things that crowd and darken such small apartments of the poor, I found the common article of cottage furniture, a long old coffer, or clothes-press, and still groping, touched the sheeted something occupying its whole length. My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!

That happy callous wretch, in her ease, all alone, had hurried on the grave's work—had stolen a stage upon me, and I cursed her in my heart. Laid out! and already! Jesus Christ! a bed, a pillow, only a *posture* of life had been something—but, laid out! Finished! No! not even yet can I cry “It is finished!” *She* was no more in the world, and from that moment there was no God in the world to me—God has forsaken me, she has forsaken me, Faith has forsaken me—there is nothing in this lonely hell which this world's vault became to me that moment, but love and death—but my evil self and what I look on, now by my buried taper! I pray for others; for myself I despair. But why call this despair? for if I pray not for myself, it is because I do not *wish*, not that I could not *hope*—a Heaven. No! The only resurrection *I could* wish, it were a madness to hope, a foolish insolence to my Maker to pray for. Shall whole existence rise round me ris-

ing, time run back, earth be herself again, field-flowers nod, waves glisten, birds sing, for me—a worm? Shall that soft white face watch the same setting sun, and the same glorious bay roll back its liquid silver, and those purple mountains lift their heads again to make that sunset the very same it was when she snatched me, me a man declined even then, to her bosom? Will the heaving of that too return, and its very snow to dazzle the eyes of angels, and surpass the chilly beauty of their drapery and their passionless motions? Will such things be? *This* were a resurrection—*this* were to live again! I want my sweet companion,—very *her*—to study with, to exchange secret doating looks with, to hope for,—to hope *with*, to bless, like a Creator if I could; my *very* Hester, to comfort me, sooth me, blush my living angel by my happy bed, bend my seraph of hope and salvation over my death-bed. Faith! Faith! Revelation! tell me all *this* may be, and I will pray again, and say *yet*, “Oh grave! where is thy victory?”

Never! never!—Therefore, feeling the loss of these things, eternal, irreparable, I will not—I would not if I could, lay that cold, cold unction to my mocked heart, that lies a bleeding in my

bosom, of transferring my love to some second Hester in an invisible Heaven, though an emanation of her sweet self—lost, lost, lost! No glorious cloud will thy wretched Ixion, a willing dupe, clasp for thee, my goddess, alas, mortal! oh mortal! It seems, nay, it is an infidelity to thee—my dearest life and love! I'll call thee still, looking stedfast in that ruin of a face, sweet *still* to me—it is infidelity to turn an eye or thought to thy shadow in Heaven! a mere trick of the inconstant worldly-hearted, to coquette with a *soul*, when the dear darling warm substantial seraph made up of body and soul, is dead and gone! Let *such* follow that sweet body no further than the threshold of the grave—let them turn back there from the wide rueful night of *that* new black world, as no fit world for them, as living men,—just look into its horrible shade and solitude, and shrink back into the world, into their own brilliant laughing theatre of life—let them send what they doated on, on its way alone, alone, with “Vale, vale, vale!” empty breath! and a compliment on marble—cold breath, cold stone!—and so overleaping the ugly gulf of corruption, pretend to rejoin the poor fond fallen creature they forsake, they leave *somewhere*, they know not where; in some

shape, they know not what; and say to their false hearts, "Well done!" and make a merit of it, as both love and devotion.

But *you*, oh *you*, (my *companion* even yet!) shall have no rival in this heart—no! not even in your own winged Soul in Heaven. That glorious stranger may or may not be hearing me, watching me while my heart-brokenness writes madness or blasphemy, but alas! she *is* to me still—a stranger.

I roll up my sunk eyes, and do I meet there what talked to me from these sad and solemn caverns? Does *she* smile even that grim mockery of one, that answers mine, *here*? No! I am all of the earth, earthy—therefore the worm is my dearer "sister" of the two than that bright dreamy one; I can shake hands with earth, with that nonentity I cannot. I can hourly open *this* black and shocking wicket, and convince myself that the little all left me *is* there, but the unscaleable gate of *that* place of a soul, is close, close shut as that of the fallen spirits!—and as so shut, I read there an inscription horribly different from that which others read or dream. Yes! if on the coffin's lid be inscribed to my mind's sad eye, "all hope abandon ye who enter here," the same is written on that high gate, since shut to sense, where others read,

‘ Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.’ My heart is too sunken even to knock—my sullen mind too wrathful to relish its promised peace ; my passion clings too desperately to what it was on the *very point* of embracing with whole arms—to part from even such a finger-end clutch as this, which I keep of my lost *substantial* heaven’s bliss—as this, of so fantastic horror to others—*this* all earthly comfort to me, poor as it is. While dallying with death, I call myself a husband—even as this my ever-sleeping bride made me, just as she fell asleep ; and with as *true* though miserable a rapture as others say to the fair transporting creature, who expects them in the night, when she opens her arms to them come home, in the love-blest conjugal bed—“ My life ! my soul ! ” do I say hollowly, doatingly, “ My dead, my dead ! ”

What others shudder but to imagine, I have looked on in its reality with steady eye, and un-revolted senses. As others project, plan, and execute stately mansions to live in luxuriously, I have plotted, bribed, planned to build a grave for myself, in which to go down alive to her, and make life resemble death. Assured as I am, that not age, nor deforming accident, nor infirmity of human nature would have deprived me of that blooming beauty’s love ; that she still,

though delicate as an angel, would have gone on to minister to me, as a ministering angel still ; what less return could I make than to wait on *her* in *her* sad transfiguration, under that last infirmity, death and decay ? She would never have turned away from me in my grey hairs, therefore never would I, from her, in her shroud, her worms, her ——

I have respected my vow ! It's tender cruelty still holds me here ; but oh, Hester ! how many deaths have you inflicted to spare me one ? Life like death, hours like long days, nights of worse than haunted horror, and years without a sun—this is the life, this the sensible death and interminable dying, that tenderness bequeathed me, and my faith to you has made me endure ! If others have proved their love by dying for the dead beloved one, I have proved a love beyond theirs, who can say—"I have *lived* for mine !"

SIXTH DAY, CONTINUED.

NIGHT.

Ystrad Fin, near Twm Sion Catti's (the Welsh Robber's Cave)
Carmarthenshire.

THE course of a celebrated river may be compared to the life's course of some renowned character, whose early stage, however interesting from the struggle in which it is generally engaged, against all the obstacles that obstruct such individual's way to that renown, is mostly forgotten in the all-absorbing excitement of his after-time — his more illustrious days and deeds.

Dyer, the poet, has made the world familiar with "Towey's Flood," and "Grongar Hill;" but few know or inquire aught about infant Towey, and his noble cradle, the mountain Carreg Towey (Tywi), under whose conical woody brow, now dusky with night, we came to tea on a golden evening. Yet is this little known course of the river marked with ten times the grandeur of its celebrated course, and

at least equal beauty of scenery. Nine or ten miles only are we from a town (Llandovery) passed through by numerous English travellers, who come to Wales to see landscapes, very few of whom ever heard of *this*—the most singular and even sublime congregation of mountains, with their waters and rocks, in either “Wales.”

The *whole* river forms a cataract down the ledges of rock, which form one *whole* side of this pyramidal mountain now full in our eyes, all the rest of it being hanging woods or many-coloured crags. Here is all the force, the rush, the tremendous plunging into rock-cauldrons, the tortuous struggling past and over fractured stone masses, the sea-like roar, and almost sea-like surf, which imagination may well conceive of a considerable body of water come down raging from the very top to the bottom of a great mountain.

Very bright and beautiful is the green of the sod, thus moistened by the perpetual showers of fine spray ; while the many sheep that shew themselves at perilous height on every little lone *balcony* of grassy projection, look like snow. Savage as the whole aspect is, of so many mountain heads, and *four* meeting rivers,

all is as sweet and pastoral as can be. The profuse green all about; the sleeping of the charming sunset along every opening of the hills, (whence come lowings, and distant bark of dogs,) a grey moss-topped cottage here, a peat-stack there; a voice of a singing milking-girl, or boy whistling home—all these contrast curiously with the frown of dark blue slate rock; the overhanging brows of shaggy thickets high in air, horrid with glooms and roar of waterfalls; the shrill crying of kites round wild battlements of granite, which start up as if splintered by thunder, into the pale fading sky.

I here am sketching the early twilight picture, not our present moonlight, recollect.

A gigantic *honeycomb* appearance gives a novel grotesqueness to this level part of the river's bed, into which it comes whirling, and begins to rest, after its long fall. These are what I called cauldrons; the water being low, the whole channel exhibits these black, and white, and green-coloured polished basins of great depth, each with its own sullen deep water. The great and grand trees overhead, look still grander from seeming in act to rush headlong from their thrones of precipice. A human nest of a hut, perched on a lofty point,

looks suspended in air, nothing appearing below but the *concave* mountain-breast, its background being the blue air, and a mile-off mountain-head, that throws out its thatch chimney-point, and figured-green earth-mound, (such it looks) more distinctly.

“And even there some human beings sleep and nestle, as quiet and happy as their sheep!” I remarked.

“Let us follow their example,” said he; “for it grows late.”

“Content. We’ve lost our fellow-traveller, Doctor, of the sea-shore,” I added; “I’ve heard nothing of him, at least.”

“I’ve seen *him* or his *wraith* many times,” he rejoined very seriously: “but as we have never approached since that time, I vex myself no more with conjecturing about him or his shadow. Good night.”

We retired to our several tents.

I myself know hypochondria but by name. Is this man under its influence occasionally?—is he a sleep-walker?—or is he hoaxing us with a mystery, to give scope to our fancy?

He often remarks that to write, to compose, even if it be sad stuff, is a pleasure to a man’s self, so far as it proves (if rational, though poor,) to himself as others, that his mind is

yet whole—(perhaps not so much: only proves that it's not all touched. There seem spotted brains; rotten in parts, like an apple). Yet he declares he never knew what it was to have one hypochondriacal fancy. Against which stands his seeming actual impression of some one, young but doleful-gestured, dressed as a tourist, glimpsing on our way—or rather, his.

High in the rock above the fall, yawns a hole—hardly a cavern—where once lurked a famous freebooter of Wales, Twm Sion Catti, saith tradition.

In the middle of the night I was wakeful, and looking through my curtain, there stood our gipsy-man in a bright moonlight, out of his tent; not gone to bed, though he had sent me so long. I present you his soliloquising, which I desired him to remember and jot down, this morning, in odd fragments, for its fancifulness.

RURAL DOCTOR (*solus*).

“The rock-pigeon returns to his old haunts of a past season, and finds them and the shelter he found before there. The birds that return across the roaring sea, to seek again our milder

winters, find here the mildness they enjoyed, and the comfort that they seek ; but men, when they migrate from the inclement world too severe for them, and come with their faint and fluttering hearts back to the haunts of their youth, as I have done ; do *they* find the peace of the rock-pigeon, or the winter-driven bird of passage ? No ! never let the decayed man revisit the scenes of his youth !—The fresh man's *first* tour ! (memorable luxury !) and the withered man's last !—what a contrast ! The morning of that first mountain-journey—and the very advent, the eve of this long lone *valley*-journey ; this setting out in shadow, amidst wild wailings, or more shocking indifference—the way pitchy dark—all dust and dead men's bones—a ghastly comparison !

“What do I here again ? This is the very spot in which I *hoped* !—the vast wild landscape I first enjoyed on my first tour. The world was then opening on me that is now shutting as fast. It was in that very meadow I asked waggishly a pretty young maid, milking, for a draught of warm milk, and she brimmed my travelling cup over, and on my hand and the ground ; and she coloured, and innocently smirked. I was not withered then, without or within. Our tongue was strange to each other,

but the universal tongue served as well for a few minutes' innocent coquetry—that of the smile, the blush, the merry good will. I could fancy these full-grown ewes quiet in this moon-shine and dew, those very lambs (thus grown to mothers) which I saw then tottering after their dams; their dams suckling those snowy little ones, and dreamed of—I know not what! Yet what a gulf in life has yawned between me and that Past, which, notwithstanding, seems present again, while all objects, even to this hollow oak, are present once more.

“Methinks I stand here, like some soldier just escaped with life from some battle fought in a mountain-buried valley. Gaining the top of one of its barrier-sides, he throws himself down to rest and breathe awhile: nothing is up there, but sweet blue-canopied sod, the sun undimmed by the horrid smoke of the scene below, smiling on in its lofty glory; nothing but innocence, sheep, sheep-cotes, silence. Then it is, that, reverting his still bloodshot eye, the bleeding wretch looks quite across that hideous depth, concealing that scene of fight and fury, the dying and the dead, and that eye rests only on the same sweet objects that are close to him, espied on the opposite pastoral hill slopes, sheep and shepherd homes, sunshine and blue

calm. He half conceits that bloody and dismal chasm does not exist! Its accursed fog of the smoke of battle, and homes burning, does not reach that higher region. Strait, he will be a shepherd too! He will tend those lambs round him: his better, gentler nature shall triumph! Alas, it's too late! He is severely wounded; he has not long to live—nay, he will not be allowed to even die in that sober paradise of his crest-fallen ambition; even that last lowly aim is denied him—to die among sheep, sheep-cotes, innocence, silence! For hark! the recal to battle already surmounts the hill that deadened the cries, and the call, as it concealed the conflict! Thither, to its loathsomeness he must return—'tis there he must die!

“And *have* I fought, bled, fallen in the world's battle since I mused in this pomp of so many mountains meeting, listened to this grand chorus of so many rivers mingling? *Can* it be? The term is not so long—some twenty-and-six years—alas! long enough to make me survivor of dynasties numerous, of revolutions numberless (none so violent as the one *within*—in *here*!) spectator of the entire career, rise, fall, and fate, of emperors that the world trembled at, and a poet that it bowed before!—of

many thrones, standing, overthrown, and re-erected once more—of gigantic efforts of states to release enslaved ones, only for the enslaved to turn enslavers in turn—of glorious lights of intellect used only as the light of *fire*, to scatter firebrands among the nations and their populates—lastly, survivor of my country—of *that* England, which gave me birth! Let me no more mourn to stand, survivor of *myself*!—And *are* all who hoped with me and for me dead? Has that fight (so short) been so fatal? And is the day just gone—life's utterly lost day? What then do I *here* again? Oh, beautiful Wales! 'tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens,' I used to cry, leaping on your hill-top sod,—but *now*—wishful when away, yet thus sick of heart, thus mournful with memories and regrets, while I do snatch such moments with you, while your sublime peace and beauty is present, what can I say *now*, except in the words of another Roman poet—'nec tecum vivere possum, nec sine te!'"

THE MOUNTAIN-DECAMERON.

SEVENTH DAY.

ARGUMENT.

The party unwittingly eat an excellent breakfast on a great grave; a green charnel-pit of the civil wars, in Wales. Battle of St. Fagan's. Farewell to the British Constitution. 'Le Peuple Souverain!' A Quaker intercedeth for Mother Church, et cetera.

MORNING.

On the River Ely, near St. Fagan's, Glamorganshire.

WE have a rather large party at our pic-nic (to talk a la *Cockney*) this serene summer morning; our place is on a steep meadow side, close to this little lone river, only divided by a hollow green lane, and some old ash trees wave cool and grand over head; our glorious roof of entire blue, gilded by the sun (who has all heaven to himself,) shining just enough through to give us all its beauty and none of its heat. We are in one of the most English-looking counties of

South Wales—and its rural richness, luxuriant grassiness, and whitewashed cots, peep soothingly, wherever our eyes can pass their pleasant prison walls of banks full of blue-bells, and a hundred other flowers and some cowslips, (precious pride of June!) yet surviving, but growing like tarnished gold in their old age. The Doctor, notwithstanding, will have his breakfast by them, as long as any are left. The company I spoke of is a pretty little boy, that the Major has invited from that cottage I see the upper half of now, the lower cut off by a steep rivulet bank, t' other side Ely, the Major carrying him across by wading—but his little sister crying to follow, our *hero* wades back—his coffee cooling the while—to fetch her also. But then the cat was walking behind, and her lady-feet were not to be wetted by the stepping-stones at which she looked wishfully. So she became our boy Charles's charge, who loves a cat like an old maid; he has half filled his father's house with "unfortunate females," tabbies I mean, doomed to death by boys who had already begun to give them the cool death which French patriots gave beautiful girls and suckling mothers in all the rivers of gallant and "fine" France. Their piteous cries (the feline I mean) always extract their ransom out of the pocket

of the young intercessor, and in they come, dripping, and fainting, and nasty, and not half alive, to be restored in the chimney-corner. There is a little tawny wretch, the ugliest alive, living now there, a perfect dwarf, owing perhaps to this foretaste of death stunting her growth.

So here they all are at breakfast, even to the cat, who is now washing her face as demurely at our out-of-door fire, as if it were the white peat-ashes hearth of her home.

The little maid's bonnet stuck with flowers, milk-bowls just washed, a stool, and many rustic valuables, lay t' other side the Ely as securely as in a house. The river ran in silence, except its own sweet sound ; a sound of singing in some distant meeting-house just reached us, but faint with that sweetest effect produced by many female infantile voices in unison. A church-bell also (before we broke up,) *to our shame*, tinkled distant summons to us in vain.

"This calm self-enjoyment that we owe to Peace," exclaimed the Major, "is the true glory that the thinking patriotic man covets to secure, which to a country is the true hero's boast ; yet how little we think of the names of those saviours of men who 'covered themselves' with this glory—the *heroes of peace* and

its sublimer perpetual though silent campaign, compared with the vulgar heroes of victory ! We regard little the labour of wielding the vast elements of human power perilously vested in dense masses of millions of men ; but glorify the occupation of those destroyers of men who have only lived to convulse those elements, only wielded them, that they might “ ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm ! ” Ancient Alexanders and modern—even ancient anarchists and modern—all have ‘ covered themselves with glory,’ at least won ‘ deathless fame.’ ”

“ To glorify them,” I remarked, “ is a species of Manichæism. To walk a lovely country like this in the most perfect security, without even your rusty sword, Major—to have so walked it beyond the memory of the oldest man on earth—to have *so* tested a mode of legislature, and with *so* triumphant a result, for the most powerful man in this country not to dare to seize yonder churn standing out as if belonging to nobody—to enjoy so much proud freedom at so truly trivial a price—to luxuriate in such a paradise of land and climate, safe of life, limb, property, while the horrid desert sands and melancholy rock recesses of many other lands—even *those* are not to be lived in, by the human wretch of *other* forms of rule, without

constant peril of all or slavery—*this is* to be a man !”

“Nay,” quoth the Doctor, “this is to be an *English*-man. How long shall we be able to say that? There is but one (*was* I would say, God visit the sins of those who compel me to speak thus, on their own heads!) but one constitution in the whole world, that has *not* been ‘found wanting’—that has withstood the shocks of ages—but one therefore that *boasts* its antiquity—as having long, long made social rational liberty part of the habits and feelings of a people, having written it in their happy hearts—written it in their cool uninflamed minds—recorded it in the popular table-talk, ‘an Englishman’s house is his castle!’—(what honest homely sublimity!) a writing and a record far more valuable than those on the statute book. This is (*was*) no legislative fine scheme of the closet, no constitution of pen or print; no, not even of Blackstone. God preserve us when our practical legislation is *bona fide* the theoretical!—when ‘le Peuple Souverain’ shall be cursed with that degree of share in electing their representatives which that *theory* pretends to belong to them !”

“Sir—Sir”—Ezekiel said, tapping my shoulder, “what might you mean by that saying

about many cheese—cheeses?—what was it you said?”

“Manichæism, you know, is worship of a evil principle instead of a good.”

“And by good and evil you’re right, friend Oswald,” cried our Doctor, now waxing so warm that we began to regret touching on politics, and to feel like certain political grey-beards when they have fairly roused the devil, by their conjurations of a power, which, because it obeys their bidding to *rise* so readily, they fancy will *do* their bidding also, when risen, and when thrust out of their own circle, by ten thousand devils at the heels of that one strong Evil One, stand wondering, wave their crutch awhile like a wand, then limp off cursing their Black Art, and hide themselves from men, but not from God—all thanks to that all-seeing God of nations! Thus, I say, we found ourselves ready to be hurried along, from the calm scene around us, on the rapid flood of rhetoric our parliamentary leader began to pour forth.

“A true Manichæan,” he went on, “is that man who exalts the Destructive powers of our country’s palladium, above the Conservative. Yet is it in the *worse* nature of the dual character of man, to do so. How else is this suicidal popular error conceivable? Destruction

is violent, arousing—salvation, calm and silent in its operation.”

“The peasants on *Ætna* walk its purpled vineyards and olive groves, with a dull step and careless eye; but thousands gather and shout, and ten thousand eyes roll dilated on the river of fire by which it consumes those blessings.

“All-preserving God is at this moment, as certainly at his stupendous work, in that blue vast without one ruffling cloud, in this globe, without sensible motion, with which we are now whirling through space, as he would be, were it reeling, comet-stricken, a black globose of ice with all earth’s dead,—a planetary hearse through space. His agency is no less active, no less glorious in this tepid bed of greensward, putting forth these wild flowers, crumbling to let forth this feeble infant violet, than if the central fire, broke loose at his call, were throwing up Continents with all their cities piecemeal, as a volcano does stones—this kingdom’s ruins mounting here, another’s there—half an empire dropping in one arctic sea; the other, displacing a sea at once, come down hissing beyond heaven’s thundering, into its antarctic; and republics and monarchies settling down into one grave under the ocean, the former bed of that emancipated fire. But *could* human eye look on this little revolutionary fight of the upper and

lower powers, it would be really finer than even sitting here, seeing that blue sky smile, this field wave its flowers."

"And my puss wash her solemn face," Charles concluded.

"And that plaguy trout play with my fly, and not be caught," said Joe, whom the Major is teaching to fish.

"The viewless and voiceless principle of attraction, wielded by God's hand, is saving us, all the while, from the horrors of planets rushing madly from their spheres. A principle which one may dare to liken to it, is equally this moment at work in preserving 'peace in our time.' *Peace*, not the peace of solitude—not the peace of dumb slaves—but millions of bold men, is now blessing *us*—of this island. Is it nobody's work? Is it magic? No; it is the operation of that Constitution which is now operating its last! that has lost its equilibrium! that is in the hands of the mad—the vanity-mad, and the 'desperately wicked!' that has blest us, but shall bless us no more—shall bless our children never!

"Oh, wise and patriotic Populace! how did you dog the heels of the evil ones of the world who dared to seize even on that beautiful principle itself—that of union, which, like attraction in the kingdom of nature, tends to save and

harmonize the elements of the kingdoms of the world!—dared to seize and pervert to the purpose of destruction, as if, indeed, some divinity of hell—a rival God of destructiveness—could wrest out of God's own grasp that glorious lever, that almighty Attraction—wrest, and use it in congregating those planets now, stilly-spinning 'on their golden axles' into separate fighting masses, instead of their old harmonious system—every sun firing some other system in lieu of lighting and guiding its own, and all in one wild whirl, presenting to the last look of the last man of earth, a bloody for a Milky way—the blood-red glare of their fighting fires in the black blot of our solar system, blind everlastingly.

“Yes, I say that to Reason's eye those unions of human elements, so boasted, so pointed to (*in terrorem*) by our Catalines, were as glorious, as friendly to humanity, as such imagined unions of systems rushing beyond their God-appointed bounds, and as portentous to this realm, as such attraction for destructiveness would be to the universal realm of God.

“Behold their work! Lay your hand on your breast, Man of England! and say that your 'kingdom' is not passed from you—that *protective* legislature—that *presidium et dulce decus*, which made every man born here, in more than metaphor a king—a king over himself, his ac-

tions, his goods ! I defy any man in this nation to go to sleep this night, assured that his government is not while he sleeps voting away half or all his property, as national debt, under a vulgar and ignorant *influence*—that he will not wake an insolvent according to law ! I defy any foreign nation to feel assured that, like that individual, it shall not learn by the next post that this nation departs from its engagements, and is scattering insolvency and ruin abroad as at home. I defy—nay, I entreat any man—Truth is not less Truth for a grotesque dress—I may be ridiculous—I do declaim grotesquely—but I say, ‘laugh—nay strike me, but hear me.’ I entreat you, Man of England ! then to answer me, whether your country be not now sleeping on a mine ?—plunged in all the perils which all allow to inevitably environ a state under revolutionary change ?—if all is not now, as regards mode of government, completely recommenced, *de novo*, as though this were some infant colony, where every thing is yet to be tried, and only to be tried at a terrific risk—risk of nothing less than our blood—and, more precious still, our liberty ?—if we be not now passive, like dumb beasts bound in a shamble, awaiting the disputes of these political butchers, in which way their work shall be

done?—more plainly, if we are not committed to all the chances of the rash plans, and vicious and purblind views of such men as Revolution always throws up from the sediment of society—even the best of them, herein but experimentalists; hence their utmost honesty no safeguard—their utmost skill no assurance; inasmuch as *they*, mere men, are fresh forming a work of time—of generations of men; *they*, theorists, are daring to overthrow the noblest growth of actual experience—*they*, clumsy and rude of hand, pretend to use the most delicate, curious, and mysterious engine imaginable, the astonishing art, or rather gradual miracle of unseen causes at last triumphant over men's very nature—the art (or merciful emanation of the Divine Wisdom rather,) of ruling millions without enthralling them? I repeat my question—Is not our country, with that long-tried venerable form of government, thrown thus back into the ranks of the thousand abortions of systems—attempts at establishing media between despotic rule and anarchy, which have invariably begun in terror, progressed in blood, ended in the deep despair of crushing despotism? Horrible alternative! either to endure such a tyranny as unmanned Man in

France, before her first Revolution, or to resist it with almost the certainty of the country of our birth and love running the gauntlet of internal and foreign scourgings, which that glorious, vain-glorious, ghastly, blood-stained great criminal of nations has been running, and grinning and groaning the while, well nigh fifty years! Man of England! was *you* reduced to this alternative, I demand, in the year 1832? And can you predict that fifty, that one hundred years, that all time, will suffice to compose your England *half*-revolutionized (the worst of states) after this convulsion, into her pristine form of perfection? That the alternative *is* terrible, I suppose none will deny.

“Take the most justifiable of rebellions, to which the nations have ever been goaded—melancholy is it to reflect that, at last the lover of liberty and man stands mournfully dubious whether the cause of humanity has gained or lost by the glorious resistance! Perhaps our own ought to be considered as one of these. Charles was doubtless a tyrant when he suspended the Constitution; when he levied imposts by his own act; when Sir John Eliott died *his* prisoner, instead of the state’s prisoner. Yet what miseries did England endure

for her resort to the sword! This very meadow we sit in, this peaceful pastoral nook of Britain, that river murmuring so musically over its little pebbled rapids now, could they speak, would groan ‘Amen’ to my words!”

“How’s that, Doctor?” we all began to inquire; being badly read, I fear, in the details of the Civil War.

Here let me edge in a word, mine esteemed friend, Hogg, on the distrust with which we ought to receive the dicta of men of warm temperaments, however sincere. I could not help reflecting that this inflammable man, who dived into the motives of public men, who formed strong opinions on their characters, was all the while a stranger to the secret sentiments of us that he saw and heard all day long. No doubt had he penetrated *our* breasts, he would have spared us this whole harangue, and all that followed, for he would have known that we much preferred the voice of the birds, and a pretty brook that ran leaping from one mossy stone to another down to the Ely, close by our corner of meadow, to *any* human.

Besides that, I cannot cordially adhere to one side of argument on any great question, while knowing that numbers of men, both wise

and good, espouse the opposite,* as is certainly the case in this tremendous question of Reform, or rather abolition of our *old* Constitution. For so far I heartily concur with this Eccentric, though only amused by his enthusiasm, that it is but hollow verbiage, a mere grace of discourse, (natural enough from our fond clinging to what the whole world envied us)—to profess ourselves *still* living under the substantial protection, however we may be under the shadow, the mere figure of that immortalized ægis of a nation. *All* parties, all theorists, all statesmen have held its very essence to consist in a harmony—a something approaching equality of power, unbroken in the Three Estates. A knotty point to discuss, no doubt, but happily *felt* as an existing reality, without discussion—at least *warlike* discussion. Is there a man in the kingdom who will deny that all real *power* is now vested, for good or for evil, in the popular branch? That vast changes have been made by the

* There are “wise and good” *Chinese* men, friend Oswald! Therefore you must beware how you take a side against the great god “Fo.” Finding myself thus alluded to by the sly Quaker, I just pop in this note, hoping it “don’t intrude.”—RURAL DOCTOR.

force of that *alone* virtually? That measures, even against the wish of the wealth and respectability of the *people* themselves, have been forced on the nation virtually by the power of *one* representative body? What signifies whether the two other branches be robbed of their free agency by a formal act of abolishment, or deterred from exerting it by regard to the nation's salvation?—they are equally reduced to ciphers. The acute and liberal Dr. Moore, a friend to the *earlier* struggle of liberty in France, asks in his Journal, “*What would become of our English Constitution, were a junto or club formed in Palace Yard, to threaten and insult our legitimate representatives, and thus influence their decisions?*” What, indeed!—But he never thought of putting such a much stronger hypothesis, as that of 100,000 men ready to march upon that devoted assembly! What then *is* become of the British Constitution when “The Birmingham Union *has* carried the Reform Bill? *they, and nothing else,*” as was too truly said. Hence I see much reason in our Doctor's denunciations of the man or men traitors to the Constitution—to posterity—who dared to point to, or stooped to beckon to such a detestable power, for even a fancied good or

well-intended purpose ; because *here* he is on ground of rock !—his argument is fact.

The man who truckles to public folly so far as to adopt the farcical slang of the People's Majesty, cannot be a great man. If a weak one he is not great ; if a rank hypocrite, he is not great : one or the other he must be, who so truckles. He knows, or he does not know, that a *whole* People's legislating is a sheer *impossibility*—that his invitation to this nominal People, is therefore one to mere fractions of it ; knots and mobs : every one of which, everywhere, that answers to his guilty call, will be *the* People—and the basest, blindest, fiercest, bloodiest among poor and rich, will be the answerers, and thus banded for the worst ends under the pretext of the best, will instantly become “the People !” It was thus in France ; it will be so here ; and must ever be thus ; for in what other way *can* many millions of men respond to the alarum-call of a leader ? Shall one moving mass be seen of human beings, colonies, and maritime men, and all over the face of land and sea, like an army of leminges in Norway, precipitating their myriads on the metropolis, if a minister wish to overawe a House of Parliament or his Monarch ? (I repeat our friend's reasoning *here* with full approval.)

What then is that call but one to acts of injustice, insolence, outrage, rapine, and blood? Will a good or great man, for *any* purpose, dare that alliance? I care not what be the *inward* conceit of the unhappy man who from that "bad eminence" of poor popularity, so "lets slip the dogs of war," who dreams to be still their *master*. If real, it must exceed in folly that presumption of setting bounds to the sea's sweep, which Canute's flatterers seemed to impute to their master. Neither can such an escape as London by chance enjoyed, when a mob of tens of thousands was allowed to parade its streets, suspend business, cause the shops to be all closed, under pretext of presenting an address, but really to intimidate the sovereign, be allowed to palliate at all the high crime against law and social order, of each and all who instigated that perilous breach of both.

I delay our Doctor's reply, on purpose to give you some idea of a sort of rural *demagogue* of the Conservative side, (*we* alone his followers,) because I think a little violence on *that* side is a sort of novelty. Besides, I love a man to seem in earnest, as well as be so. I'll answer for his sincerity.

"This field is full of dead, or at least was," said he; "one of those pits that civil war

war fills, as pestilence does its city ones. Here was fought, on May 8th, 1648, the battle of St. Fagan's, in which the Parliament's army made a great slaughter of the Welsh enlisted in the Royal cause. That poor little girl probably does not know she's playing so merrily there with our boys, over the skulls or skull-earth of her forefathers, and has been breakfasting on a blooming charnel. Seven hundred widows were made in this small neighbourhood alone, it appears. This river Ely, a little higher up by the church, was seen, as he was about to drink, distinctly reddened with human blood by a contemporary writer and poet, Edward Williams, who has recorded the fact. The men were so utterly extirpated, that none but these poor women were to be seen tilling the fields. Famine followed, and they tore the seed put into the ground, out again to devour, and cut the green stalks of grain to help to roof their ruined homes against the weather—probably not expecting ever to be allowed to cut it when ripened. Such is Civil War!

“Man of England! was you reduced to that dire alternative of slavery, or rebellion in the year 1832? I repeat,” vociferated our orator, starting to his feet, stroking the visiting cat all the while in his arms, and a strange green

cap twisted up out of a huge leaf of dock on his head—grave as a spirit from the grave, or one risen from that flowery Golgotha, to denounce with a hollow voice and wild pointing of his finger, woe to the peace-breakers, woe! And with all this, provocative of laughter as was the figure, one *could* not laugh. There was too much heart and soul-felt intensity of emotion in this grotesque mourner for the Constitution, to suffer the ludicrous, just playing round our lips, to survive; it died away in an infectious ardour of sentiment, quite apart from consideration of his truth or error. How dangerous must be the influence of popular demagogues, when even an orator such as this, without the least design but the outpouring of his heart's impulse, and mind's sudden flowering of fancies—a political *Improvisatore*—so fantastic, so little graced by nature, so preposterous in his images, and rush of conceited illustrations—could chain us in a sort of rapt trance, forgetting as he warmed, the birds, brook, and little bell, much more in unison with a summer Sabbath morning! What might not more talent in a wider field effect? But after all, perhaps, one thing would be wanting, which would spoil all—the impression of actual heart-truth.

“I know it is the fashion now,” he resumed, calming his tone, “to look back with a sort of indulgent regret, to those first men of the fatal ‘movement’ whom it has now crushed into insignificance. A man is now admitted in the ranks of at least *well-meaning* unfortunates, in whose fall I glory, because he fell by the hands he rallied to effect the fall of the Constitution. Sir, I maintain that this very fact of his being so regarded, speaks volumes for his past conduct !

“What must be the violences of those he has let loose on us, those who have kicked *him* like a stepping-stone behind, when even so violent an innovator as *he* begins to be viewed complacently—forgiven—regretted—possibly wished back by *men of peace*? Oh! it is mighty natural for a wretched flock of silly sheep, when a wolf has torn open their pen, and hyenas have rushed in at the breach he tore, to regret that single wolf that’s run off, frightened as they—but does the thinking watchful shepherd? No! *he* curses *him still*! he spies him where he skulks in the distance, with his retracted lips shewing his baffled teeth, and with his forlorn yell baying the moon:—for ‘*Who* let in those bloodier beasts?’ says he—‘I grant *he’d* do less mischief than

those, but is not every act of their destruction *his* act? ‘*Qui facit per alium facit per se.*’ Therefore no more damning proof of his fault than his fall, can be afforded. See him lone and blasted! He tells his own tale as fearfully as Phaeton, a blackened carcase stricken to the earth, told the tale of Phaeton, the wretch of a reckless vanity, cajoling the parental God to put the reins in his weak hands—Phaeton, who endangered heaven itself—the incendiary of a world! *Why* is the ‘man of the People’ now a solitary man, and no more an idol? *Why* are the best friends of their Country now in retreats and obscurity? *Why* are all the evil spirits of the age so active, eager, all abroad? *Why*, but because the horror of anarchical change is come, and a dismallier time coming, the black evening of a coming blacker night, in which the creatures of usefulness, of light, hide themselves, and croaking ravens, and ominous owls, and the crooked-pathed noxious insects, and the terrible beasts of blood, with their ‘wonted cry’—all come abroad, all daring through darkness? Or should I not rather say, as those foul things come forth in a nearly total eclipse of the sun, mistaking that ghastly swoon of day for their own natural night, making the shade more hideous? God of his mercy or-

dain, that so may *our* eclipse of our Country's star pass away, as that from the eternal face of heaven; but what hope of it? *Who* induced that eclipse?

“Standing here in its moral darkness, perplexed with all the fear of change that an English father ought to feel for my children's wrong, I arraign him, though for myself without a touch of fear, whom both years and fortune shut up in a total eclipse, who can say with Job, ‘He hath put my brethren far from me; my kinsfolk have failed, and my friends have forgotten me; He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone, for mine hope hath He removed like a tree.’ I claim the right to arraign him, and his myrmidons, at the bar of his country's reason, because it is my country as well as his. When he and they overawed the legislature, they became traitors to the Constitution—when they threatened the legislative Bishops, they outraged Church and State in one act—when by this system, by formally thanking rebels, by a series of such acts, they at last changed the whole *practical* Constitution, I say they committed a crime, incalculable in its mischiefs, against Social Order, against every man-child born, or to be born in this realm. As an English freeman, on his own

(repudiated) Whig principles, of the rights of man, I would to his face, as readily as here in this wild place, standing on a field of dead that Rebellion filled—charge on him the ruin of my native land. I will say here, ‘Come forth, Man of the People, and try whether now they will stoop for you to mount and be borne to beard your King! Friend of the Constitution! come forth and bow to the Dictator you have paved the way for! Where are you? I hear your mere voice, indeed, lifted to swell the Irish howl of his pack, but its melancholy sullen single sound is to me like that discomfited wolf’s of my fancy, watching aloof the work of the destructive stronger herd! You, you have acted to your country’s glorious Constitution, as did Vortigern to his country! *He* but invited as an ally a terrible enemy, but *you* took for your ally an evil Principle, destructive to liberty beyond whole armies—Terror itself—Terror! Terror! May the God of nations reward you, according to your deeds!’”

SUNDAY NIGHT.

Llanelan Church and Village, Banks of the Ystwith,
Cardiganshire.

To stand in the soft nightfall, following a golden day, in the depths of lofty, green, pastoral mountains, deepening the beautiful twilight of the hour into an olive-coloured dusk—a more solemn, more pensive twilight of their own—then looking round in the fine obscure, to catch the lingering last of the dying glow, tinging with orange that part of heaven where the great ball went down, seen through some noble pass, the mellow flush filling all the aperture, just at the moment as the world seems swimming from our view, and nature leaving us to utter dark—how fine a surprise is it to catch the solemn outline of some antique ivy-grown church tower, also in that mountain dip, dimly defined against that celestial background of a glory dying! That object so pensive, so sublime in its consonance to that calm departure of day—almost assuring a to-morrow of cloudless glory—is

itself associated with holy, happy, and hopeful dying,—that most venerable object, steadfast as the mountain shadows round, looking tranquillity! I know no pleasant surprise in common life, finer, more fancy-fraught, more soul-exalting than this! *Quaker* though I am, this surprise I have just had, and just enjoyed. I envy not the sectarian, whatever may be his zeal or his merits, who can look with evil eye on such an object, or remember in such a moment (or, remembering—not regret) that God the Father's one great family of men should ever split into factions, ever be seduced into differing modes of thanking, or petitioning him,—ever be known by other denomination than the “Children of God.”

I know there are those who would deem me an apostate to my sect, which discountenances all formal prayer. Yet I am none; though “*disowned*,” (for my union with that dear lost one, for whose sake and whose love I fear I might have been led almost to disown *them*, after my heart was once gone to her)—and though I have never thought it needful *formally* to be readmitted, as I was not prevented attending meetings, still I am a “Friend”—however light I hold such points of difference as “thou,” or “you,” warring neither against monosyllables, nor coat-

collars, nor eschewing all colours but drab. If one prefer oral adoration unpremeditated, another like to come unprepared with set words, another in dumb reverential waiting for some possible whisper vouchsafed—before their common Father—why may not each even interchange, now and then, their several modes of obeying one holy impulse? How can I, owing various blessings to that parent, feel anything but approval toward my shepherd brothers here, when as I wander their quiet green vallies and hill-sides in the deep stillness of a sabbath noon, I hear the bell that “tolls *them* to prayer?” And why not me? Though feeble as a sheep-fold’s, hardly audible above a noisy brook or beyond a little swell of hill—regarded as a *call* to such high purpose, it is to me the very same as the pealing of the anthem, as the celebration of the high mass, as the cry of the Moslem watchmen from the minaret tower—as the doubtful “motion” of the spirit within, that in like manner solicits those of my persuasion to come to God and be comforted. And if *I*, a worm, cannot but overlook such distinctions, I cannot, I dare not but impute to our universal Parent, at least equal latitude of view. When I can believe that my Father loves *me* for *my* mode of loving and thanking him, and hates

you, or you, or you, for yours, I shall also believe that a mother, bending over her babe, and presenting to its pleased lips the white blessing of her bosom, will be well pleased if it roll up dumbly a sleepy eye of pleased content to her own, turned down to it in her fondness,—but furious even to withdrawing it, should it express the same joy by the infantile crowing exultation, or inarticulate efforts at speech, or any mode but that *one*.

“Beyond all temple, the upright heart and pure”—is to me an axiom; but I own my boldness, and leave to all to correct me if I am bold to irreligion. I love to listen to that Sunday bell, above all things; my heart cries “God speed ye!” very heartily to these neat, clean, happy Welsh cottage-girls and “mountain-men,” winding along the hill breasts, or along these river meadows of bright grass, in the sun on such day, on their way to *worship*, without a thought to what worship-*place* they are hastening. Hence I can linger lovingly by these most *un-Quakerly* graves of Welsh burial grounds, profuse of ornaments even for the dead, while my creed forbids them even to the living; I love to hang, I say, over these beautiful graves, though still approving the oblivious plainness of ours; nay, I have often replaced

a torn-up sprig of box, or a flower, without a fear of offence. These white-washed tiles, which inclose the whole top of the grave, (with the shape so sadly significant! that of the coffin) and the flowers growing, but sickly, there, turning the roof of the "narrow house" into a little flower-plot;—I approve, nay, I love their melancholy dallying with the scowl of death, till he grows almost pleasant as those sweets, smiling as the blue May morning that washes them with its pure tears of dew! And if the little lonesome mounds are left to nature, without one ornament, unless a glow-worm's at midnight, I think that little green-beamed lamp of such green sepulchres, or the mere lampless sod, quite sufficient for such temporary abiding place of my "dear brother," or "dear sister," there sleeping; regarding it, not as a deadly hole where they are cast, but a mysterious nest for the yet unfledged wingless soul, to burst that frightful human crysalis form, the corpse—brooded over by our mighty mother Nature, unstirring, undisturbed, only awaiting the fullness of time, and the everlasting May-morning of Heaven's spring.

Moreover, if there be a man devout by reflection, the result of full conviction of a God, and if he, for *himself alone*, prefer to attend that

place of worship only which is *within* his own heart—if he be superior in his self-dependent moral loftiness, to that base and abject spring of the religion of too many, *mere* dread of the rod—the rod of pain perpetual; if he despise that sort of skulking virtue which must never face temptation, and that faith in leading strings which must be always under one nurse; if he will prefer to faint rather than lean on such a hope as will lead him only by the duskiest lamp-light, demanding that the sun of Reason be shut out quite, just on entering the most tremendous of shades, where even the full blaze of that blessed sun cannot *far* penetrate—the passage between this world and the next; if he will not hug himself in single salvation, or “bright reversion in the sky” for his single sect, but embrace the veiled fate of universal mankind:—I say, at such a man standing on his own *conscious rectitude*, on his own peril, with all his doubts, misgivings, weakness or darings of opinion—let no man take offence. But if he stand thus entrusted to his own nature, ought the whole moral discipline of a *vast society*, to be equally relied on? Is it sure that *millions* will also, *each* sit as a God in judgment on himself? Who, that looks at those millions in our dissolute land, can dream such a thing? If that one too presumptuous man

fall, and die for his daring—die even everlastingly, it is but one man and soul lost. But if these “masses” we talk of, feeling the removal of religious check, act as *general* poor human nature *ever will* when so released, what wild work will *they* make—what a mighty ruin !

I have been led into these remarks, (the result of our conversations perhaps of this morning—Sunday) by reverting in thought to the recent outcry about a voluntary principle—not only—it’s very clear—as applied to the discipline of our Protestant Church, but our national polity, the *will* of “masses” being set up as the best law, and those masses the purest species of executive.

And who could come, as I have described, on a mountain church at twilight, the gathering place of so many of the “fathers of the hamlet” for the most sublime of purposes, through ages past, and still overshadowing their remains as a mother bird broods over the lifeless-looking egg, without a prophetic sigh for the hour (if it *must* come), when general dilapidation, unchecked by our *enlightened* generation, shall go on, till little remain of them for the eyes or hopes, or soul’s refuge of the next,—but their roofless ruins, when “the birds of the air shall build there, and the beasts of the desert shall hide here?” I trust such a consummation is far

from the wish of my brethren, however *some* Dissenters may hope that the conventicle will not follow the Church, but flourish on its ruins—vain hope!

I would fain see in those leaders and organs of the “masses” some share of that stern, quiet self-discipline, and rejection of external authority, and high sense of Divine *general* superintendence, which I have assigned as attributes of my imagined man of natural religion. Each of these public advocates of license *ought*, Firstly, to be a such a man—so “sufficient” to his own governance. Secondly, he ought (to be the least consistent,) to believe that all men, with all their frightful, almost resistless incentives to all manner of crimes, are even as he is. I say he *ought*, or how can he reconcile his conduct to common sense, or humane regard to society?

Yet as to the first requisite, we find *these* very men who insist on this emancipation, of all men living the most easily hurried away by a tumultuous spirit, that makes each a slave to its veering whirlwinds! We find them fierce, rash, reckless of results, even to plunging their country into civil war, and their own hands in blood!—instead of such calm and peace-loving spirits as have been all the sages

and wise men, and true benefactors of our species—instead of that intense innate love, and sense of the loveliness of moral beauty and social order—we find *these, to a man*, far more kindred to a Cataline than a Numa; to those haughty old absolute tyrants they affect to execrate in theory, than to those meek, tolerant, good men-lovers and guides, and saviours of mankind, whom they as falsely profess to venerate.

Look but at one as an example—*to-day* he would rend the empire in twain, swearing that conscience dictates his mad demand,—*to-morrow*—to please the short-lived “powers that be,” because become *his* friends—of the moment—he revokes the decree, and the United Empire may survive a while, till *he*, that *one* versatile, faithless, mutinous man, again change his mind or his manœuvre!

As to the second requisite, that these abolishers of all but the voluntary principle, should really think thus highly of their fellow men, for their *collective* severe and noble rectitude, their *natural* devotedness, *do* their leaders shew such deferential belief? So far from it—no most insolent tyrant—no taskmaster over yoked slaves—no Arab driver of his drove of human wretches, across the Desert, ever did or does exhibit more boldly his opinion, that these

“masses” are indeed mere mechanical *masses* of machinery! The spirit of the times talks of humankind like steam, “ten thousand, or a hundred-thousand-men-power”—instead of moral self-respecting men owning God, and worthy to be trusted each with his own happiness, his soul’s hope, and *all* with that of each. These very oracles, these utilitarian sages treat *men* as if still the unsentient clay out of which we are told God made the first. “Agriculturists,” for instance, they say, “may perish—must perish—but what’s a generation or two? The *land* remains—the *nation* in its energies and its greatness remains.” Coldblooded madness of national vanity! Yet these sages in the same breath claim “sovereignty” for these same earthy “masses!” What becomes then of the pretence of these great bodies of a nation being our best and oracular legislative and executive power in one, if so worthless in the eyes of *their* philosophy? if so utterly to be overlooked in a national view? if, in short, little more than animated clod, to be trampled into the earth again, by these sublime leaders in their march, whenever it no longer suits their purpose to create out of them a heterogeneous image like Nebuchadnezzar’s, and set it up to be worshipped by us?

A church (by twilight too !) having fired even me, a Quaker, and thus driven me to run a muck at what I rarely allow to trouble me, in my now lonely and late and cool travel, towards *that* country where even demagogues themselves must be cool and be silent—let me instantly revert to the pleasanter calm current of our progresses “under the shade of melancholy boughs.”

I had struck away alone from my party (as each of us does when the humour of angling, of subscriber-seeking, or of total solitude cometh over one of us), and had lost myself between the hamlet of Lledrod and a spot on the river Ystwith, our point of re-union, when, just as I saw a light or two begin to twinkle on some huge breast of hill sheep-walk from the hut perched there, I at last caught the glimpse of this church between two heights, in a *bwlch*, or mountain-pass, and the sad result has been, this lengthy plea for a little longer life to Mother Church and Father State.

Here being all re-assembled, we resorted each to his devotions, then to his tent.

END OF THE SEVENTH DAY.

THE MOUNTAIN-DECAMERON.

EIGHTH DAY.

ARGUMENT.

Beautiful situation of Llangoed Castle on the Brecknockshire Wye. Cefn Twm Bach. The Hermit-Errant of Wales. Membra Disjecta of Tragedy.

MORNING.

Llyswyn ('White Palace,' Anglice) and Llangoed Castle on Wye, Brecknockshire.

WE came by earliest morning, with the "song of earliest birds," and the sun shining aslant in our faces without heat, to this, the site of a palace of some of the Cambro-British princes, as the name of the village implies, compounded of two words, signifying "Palace" and 'White.' The mild long sunshine threw the shadows of the small village cots and their trees across our road. In Wales, the same *number* that constitutes a

congregation makes a "Village." We came to the place of the princes of the land, and said, 'Where are they?' (the ruins, we meant). And an echo answered—'Where *be* they?' The voice of a 'lump of a boy'—(Welshly-ly speaking), re-echoed our question—"Whoy, yhere they be! yhere be Llyswyn!"—White hermitage-looking homes of one story, and thatch, and a bit of the road turned into a fold-yard, cows and geese, and a trumpeter cock, were the palace and court-yard we found, and here stood the young "prince of the (Welsh) blood"—a pellucid gem at his nose, scratching his head, his mouth wide open, and eyes vying with it in dilation, to see a squad of "foreigners" at that hushed hour of morning, in the quiet "street" of his ancestral city of Llyswen! (thus it is pronounced).

Following the river side, by a bye path, we soon saw a sort of grand green gloom, as it were, shutting up the way to Builth, like the gorge of nearly meeting mountains. This proceeded from majestic heights, clothed with old woods, that almost impend over the romantic road. Our parallel bye-road soon led us to a scene and mansion, that made full amends for the loss of our expected palace, of which *periiit etiam*

ruina! This was Llangoed Castle, the seat of F. Macnamara, Esq., his paternal inheritance. In all Wales, and along the whole course of the Wye, we found nothing superior, if equal to the situation of this fine seat, completely shrouded in umbrage of ancestral trees,—and a grand solemnity of mountain-shadow, thrown, vast, over the whole locality, by that long, wood-clothed precipice, just mentioned. The most beautiful river of South Wales glassily gliding past, looked peace itself, while overstretching arms (ivy-covered) of oaks bowered half its breadth in the most romantic manner,—it's hitherto wilder course, full of rock cataracts, as one may call them, just ere entering this domain of reposing loveliness, assuming a placider dignity of flow and hushed but deeper sound, appropriate to its new region. Meanwhile, there is still both visible and audible just above, one of the most noisy, snowy-looking, green-gleaming battle of its waters and the rocks, though here so composed, so whisperingly gentle. Dark as is all with that pleasing horror on the Brecknockshire side, (where the still antique-looking house is descried by the eye, directed under spreading heads of trees that seem almost to touch the soft grassy expanse of its rural park), the prospect

changes just across the stream, to a sunny open upland of various views, in Radnorshire, heightening the effect of the umbrageous glooms here.

“I rarely ride this way,” said our guide, “without deviating from the turnpike-road, at a spot called the ‘Lea’ just by, to enjoy this bye-way to Llyswen! Here I can dismount and have a sprawl at the foot of one of these fine old trees, hanging from the very bank of the stream. How fine are the seeming pools its indented shores form here! Here in twilight, I figure to myself the forms of such men as Evelyn, who might have written his ‘*Sylva*’ here, and Walton (pity that he had so unromantic a river for his scene), and Sir Henry Wotton. The “melancholy Cowley” always will stand under that great beech—doing nothing, perhaps looking at the scaffold before Whitehall all the while; but easy old Walton fishes that pool t’other side, reflected in his old-fashioned coat, with its huge hanging cuffs, and its *beefeater*-looking full skirt—headlong in its glass.”

We reached a solitary mound of sod, darkly shadowed by trees, a constant moan of the river re-echoing there, and trees glooming like an aisle.

“This is a tomb,” he remarked. “The father of the courteous owner of this enviable residence for poet, philosopher, or true *Old English Gentleman*—lies within this mausoleum of Nature’s handiwork, conformably to his last will.” We thought of Beattie’s Hermit’s Wish.

“ Mine be the breezy hill that skirts the down,
There a green grassy turf is all I crave,
Fast by a brook, or fountain’s *murmuring wave*,” &c.

and thought this locality finely fulfilled it. Lord Camelford might have found a grave here to his (congenial) fancy, without his corpse running the risk of a voyage.

“Have you experienced this gentleman’s ‘courtesy?’” asked the Major.

“I have, and I have not,” he replied. “I did not use that word vaguely. Quite a stranger to him as I still am, I once received a truly polite, and more than polite, elegantly-worded note of invitation to visit (for a stay of some time) this delightful home of his, on the mere knowledge derived through a third person, his tenant, that I was something of the literary *species*, and a little *Doctor Syntaxish* in the picturesque. My hermit habits deterred me from availing myself of this kindness, but I did

not the less feel it. It formed a strong contrast to much that I remark around me, in the grandees of Wales. Were this even a public acknowledgment of his urbanity, I can hardly think he need take offence at this introduction of his name. I do not even know Mr. M. by sight; I am told he contributes to our anonymous Public Literature."

"Then you find *some* of your Welsh gentry literary?" I observed.

"Unluckily," said he, "this gentleman only *resides* in Wales, is not Welsh, *far less* 'Welshly.' But never believe that I reflect on so large a class, with which I hold *no* direct intercourse as the gentry of the Principality. Once for all then, *let me utterly disclaim it*. That reading is not so much resorted to, as by the English of the same class, I am too strongly assured to doubt the fact. Yet, in very populous and wealthy districts, book-clubs are not unknown. In fact, society in *Wales*, more than in most places, baffles all generalization of its character.

"For instance, you enter a town or village, and you see two young men in black, either playing at leap-frog, or tickling each other, or playing such lubberly uncouth pranks together, as to an English looker-on is more than ridicu-

lous. You learn these are two Reverend Gentlemen, of the Church, too! Suppose a satirist should note down, for his Journal, ‘The young gentlemen *in Orders*, of this country, are the most vacant-minded, most revoltingly coarse of habits, the most idle?’ &c. &c. &c.—near *this* very village, Llyswyn, he would find one of their body, that the English Clergy would be proud to claim—(how few English divines have written *sermons* that became really popular proved by multiplied editions!) A few miles off in this same county—he would find another, doing honour to his calling and himself; indeed, to his county—a man of varied accomplishments, buried (like many more literati metaphorically) in a ‘black valley’—an eloquent speaker and tasteful antiquary and exemplary rector—to me a total stranger—but I have not the less pleasure in doing justice to genius. For by genius, I am told, he has alone distinguished himself, being self-taught in all beyond the common routine of clerical education. Mr. P.’s modesty is equal to his talent, I’m told, so I shall not make free with his name.

We reached a ferry-house across the Wye, in a most romantic and solemn situation, called ‘Cefn Twm Bach,’ (Little Tom’s Boat). There the “right merrie” and obliging hostess of the

thatched hostelry (a favourite haunt of our Doctor, it seems) our tent-system being suspended for to-day—brought us forth apparatus for breakfast, and bespread with it a lone little meadow close to the broad stream, shadowed by an opposite mountain, and by rocky banks with noble trees—and here, while we took a long rest, lying about on a very galaxy of daisies, and while our sons (we have entered into a copartnership of paternity), paddled themselves about in the smaller ferry boat, the “head of the firm” put on his vegetable cap, and shuffling out of the sun, read as follows, while the Major fished.

THE “HERMIT-ERRANT,” OR “LONE
MAN” OF WALES,

COMMONLY CALLED “THE HAUNTER.”

“Quo vadam nescio ;
Invitus morior ;
Valete, posthumi.”—OLD EPITAPH.

THERE lived formerly a solitary man, whose habits might have suggested the idea of “Old Mortality” to the great Novelist, had not a Scottish prototype existed. To say he *lived* in Wales, would have been contradicting all traditional authorities, which all concur in asserting that he *lived* nowhere. However, the chief and the last scene of his Wanderings was the Principality. The object of his perpetual travel was (though innocent enough) at least a less religious one than that of the Scottish wanderer. This man’s was to watch the last acts of the eventful Drama of Life—hunting, throughout the range of his restless excursions, whatever human beings especially struck his fancy, or touched his heart, quite up to the mortal issue of their being’s adventure : for what but a perilous adventure is every born man’s

emergence from the night of unessential Nought?—the grand (but hazardous) privilege to *earth* (as yet nothing suffering, nothing fearing)—of starting up a figured creation with the breath of the Almighty in “its nostrils,” to fear much, suffer more, enjoy little?

Not the last, however—the death-bed scene alone—was the quarry at which the melancholic curious man flew, but whatever results of passions, or virtues, or failings, might follow those predisponent events, often decisive as death, long before the day of natural death.

For example—when “The Lone Man”—for he was known by that epithet within the memory of old people (his real name “has perished from the earth,”*) chanced to read, in some small dingy-typed newspaper of the day, such as newspapers were then, some “moving accident,” or strange outbreak of human passion, or guilty enormity, which left life to the actor or sufferer, if conjoined with deep interest of some sort, attaching thence to such person—he would note down the minute particulars, the ‘when and where,’ of the matter,

* “ Unknown the region of his birth,
The land in which he died unknown,
His name hath perished from the earth.”

the being's locality, his birthplace, probable future haunt, (if to be guessed,) with all that could assist his future inquiries about such mark of his curiosity. And as his visits were never ended, only intermitted, to every part of his native country, that is, Great Britain, and often extended to the Continent, this secret haunter of men's footsteps, very often did succeed in tracing persons, who little thought of such follower at their heels, in a man who had no earthly concern in their fates, but that of being also a man. Every body has heard such sayings as these, especially in rustic districts, "they (he or she) came from such a country—they are strangers *here*—but they *do say*——" Our hero, like jesting Pilate, when he would not stay to be told what was truth—would never stay to hear what, in most cases, he believed to be *not* truth, as in the vulgar more common-place gossip of such localities. But there are stories of a more serious stamp, and involving a deep interest, often thus floating round individuals or families who have emigrated from their earlier haunts; and it was to these that his remarkable memory, aided by his tablets, afforded sometimes a secret but almost sure clue.

This clue he never permitted to peep from

his own breast; but with feigned listless gossiping inquiry, would by means of it become master of the whole secret of many a fugitive's, many a victim's, many a sufferer's destiny, which yet remained (unless when death had rendered its revelation an indifferent matter,) as profoundly secret as they themselves could desire (his own harmless prying excepted) even were their good fame or life itself involved in the secret.

Now the incentive to all this was not wholly idle curiosity; it was the dregs of something nobler—the lingering of an interest that *once* touched his inmost heart, but now merely dallied with the overshadowed mind, in its useless age and solitude, helping to gild a little the gloom, and render the shade less dismal.

It was that sort of misanthropy which is the reaction of overwrought interest and curiosity about humankind, and the vehement desire to love man, baffled, and thence indignant, grieved, morose, which made the Hermit-Errant this sort of ghostlike spy on the lives of his brother-men.

For himself, he too might have afforded, un-awares, a fine subject for any brother Hermit-Errant, to exercise *his* haunting propensity upon. He was, in truth, an enthusiast, not

devoid of genius; talented, but without available talent; virtuous, yet without virtuous principle; proceeding in the right way, but without a guide except his native impulses; like a ship sailing on a right tack by a happy but precarious conjunction of wind and tide. Still with a light heart and conscience, a most sanguine frame of mind, and high ambition but aimless, he reached complete manhood without calamity, or, to go on nautically, without encountering shoal or squall, or leak, to arrest his career. His pride made him self-dependent in his opinions. He deemed it a species of rebellion against the Giver of Reason to accept in lieu of that glorious gift any substitute whatever—it seemed a downward approximation to the nature of the brute. Hence he despised the aspirant for the joys of Heaven, whose innocence sprung from the fears of the pains of Hell *alone*; and was thus severed at once from a vast body of his fellow-men, in the point of religion. The same spirit ruled him in the matter of morality; he disdained to be moral on compulsion, and little venerating those whose virtuous conduct was mainly attributable to terror of Law, or of the finger of Scorn, or even more awful terrors—made a Judgment-day to himself of every natural day—a sort of

vicegerent God of his mind. Liberty—liberty wisely, temperately enjoyed—was his soul's aspiration—liberty to make his choice between Good and Evil—between Virtue and Vice, without one attracting or repelling power, beyond that Virtue's own ineffable beauty—that Evil's own insufferable deformity.

Thus launched on the perilous sea of Life, the next thought was to what high and happy haven to steer—the solitary, proud, and pure spirit being its own pilot.

But as our present concern with this personage is but secondary, in so far as he happened to preserve a story of more interest than his own life, leave we to future incidental notice the whole long interim between this his life's dawn, and its evening. Suffice it to say, that the habit of thinking over his future course, tempted him to solitude till Solitude and thought began to charm for their own sake. Then he traversed many lands, all with aim to *some* time rejoining society. But thus quitting it, a distaste toward it began to steal upon him; or, at least, the calm retired contemplation of life to please beyond its actual stir. His lonely wanderings with a social purpose grew from a habit into a passion, till a purposeless lone and wandering life became of

itself an aim. All his lofty aspirations were cheated with some dream of a morrow always coming, that never came.

To be brief—behold, after his high hopes, his fierce ardours, his lofty contemplations—the creature of all these—the Lone Man! A tall, taciturn, almost death-pale, pensive human figure, already withered and bowed, but less by age than habit of bending over the earth in incessant thought, (mostly sad and solemn,) as he walked where total loneliness produced carelessness of outer personal habits, under avenues of trees ankle-deep in yellow leaves, or the far-out solitary sea-sands in the retrocession of the tide. To others he seemed as attached to the charms of lonely nature as ever. Probably he was; but one who should look within him, would perhaps have found the tie of a very different character. The soft, silken, pleasurable attachment to deep quietude and the mountains, which attracts the happy young, and that sterner one, and stronger far, which binds to them the man of wounded mind and baffled ambition, have little affinity. The feeling young grieve, but the feeling aged die, to be torn from the peace of their solitude. Thus our young enthusiast might have been likened to the wild kids or lambs, frisking on

the skiey hill-top bank of spring-green sod, a delighted creature of the wild mountain's fresh sunny outside, but not inseparable. There is, however, another animal family grimly attached to that same mountain, the primeval creatures preserved within its entrails, become long ago one with the cold stone, inseparable but by destruction. The sweet turf, the dam's full udder, attaches *those* to their haunt of the high blue; sullen calm, petrified amalgamation, and a drear antiquity, alone, is the bond of these last to *their* sunless *habitat*. Fantastically speaking, one might compare that young hill-top-climber in his buoyancy of proud hopes, to the former of this class of *mountaineers*; the same, when sobered down into our almost ghostly, white-lipped contemplatist, gliding slow at those hills' feet, in the creeping fogs of the day's and year's decline, in the most lone of the Welsh ravines, to the last-mentioned denizens, grown into the very bosom of the rock.

Like some care-worn loiterer, who, seeing boys in all the eagerness of the game of marbles, stops and watches the game too, but from pure listlessness so stops, so watches; then, passing away, still diverts his gloom with the thought of their blithe looks, and with

their voices pleasant in his ears still, but no more regarding which won, which lost—even so perhaps our Hermit-Errant dallied only with his own despair, while seemingly so curious in human dealings—the actors—their excitement, his object; the issue of the game of life they played, of little or no interest.

However this might be, it occasionally happened that a person from beyond sea, or from a distant part of the kingdom, newly arrived in some remote new place of abode, would be startled by the dark reading, the soul-scrutiny, the secret cognizance of a great melancholy eye fixed on his features, with something of the solemn yet passionless earnestness, every one has attached to their idea of the gaze of a ghost—a stoney eye without the scorned nothingness of an effigy—a dead eye without the utter apathy of death, but tenfold its ghastly horror. Not that the watcher exhibited anything awful, when the almost angry watched man could revert his own spell-bound eye to observe what body that “evil eye” belonged to—anything beyond a lofty stature, in rusty black, travel-stained, resting on a long wand with a spiked end, which he both walked and rode with. It was useful to sound a turf-roofed bog, ere he ventured on it, as well as to

help him on very steep hill-sides, where he was often seen aloft, in the sea's vicinity, at sunset, as if, after a farewell to the yet unshken sun of the valley, he had climbed for one more smile and last look of the great glorified and dilated sun of the sea, in the melancholy distance of red-tinted fog.

It might be that stranger's former state was well known to this mysterious watcher, but he always withdrew his slow eye, (for he was now "a man insensibly subdued to settled quiet,"*) and if any expression was betrayed at all, it was a somewhat severe pity. His hair almost white as driven snow, compared with his face, where time did not write more than fifty, gave a sort of pathetic interest to his aspect, implying that premature snow to have been shed there by the same cause or causes which had diffused those indescribable traces of a death to the world, which marked his whole sleep-walker-like deportment—a death to the world without a birth to the world eternal, for the Hermit-Errant was never known to enter a place of worship, although he had been overheard either praying or worshipping, in mid-day, on some flowered sunny plot of grass, under the

* Wordsworth.

mountain's shelter, where he believed himself alone.

He had a trifling fund, which he strove to flatter himself would hold out Life's day till it was ended naturally—or in some swoln brook, or by a spring-tide surprise, like any other human animal of the shepherd, or swineherd, or beggar breed, his brothers in obscurity. Yet he doubted: and hence every guinea pulled forth wrung his heart, under this too well-founded fear, that his life's *yarn* and that would not correspond, haunted with a horror of a worse kind of imagerial spectre than Death the Skeleton—Death in the loose, and squalid, and filthy, and death-pale flesh! horrid far beyond bone (the pure resurrection bone, in some sense triumphant over the *wormy* Death) I mean Famine. Yet not so much that actual Gorgon, in its cadaverous blue, haunted our haunter, as the prostrate and obscene half-man half-worm form of Poverty, to which it was tied, grovelling on the belly, crying up to those who tread on it, seizing offal as a prize—a meal; familiar with all pollutions, enjoying the dunghill for its warm reek, and the brick-heap for its comforting though mortal fumes! loathed what had been loved! spurned as nuisance

what once held elements of attractive greatness, and still the *form* MAN's !

A very old attorney of Chester dying, left him a house ; but he found it nearly mortgaged to its value, *secundum morem* of much Welsh *ostensible* good property in the hands of the nominal owners. However, one part of this poor legacy was almost invaluable—huge heaps, office-full and garrets-full, of all sorts of documents, in MS., in print, on parchment, with newspapers endless, but disorderly ; all these preserved as proofs of something, *once* of vast import to be proved, *now* become so indifferent as to be cast there to rot ! And it was this very feeling that gave them value to our *natural* antiquary as I shall call him. For scorning the pedantic minutiae of antiquarianism, he had a deep, a soul-felt interest in its broad principle. How would he have thrown his whole soul into Geology, had he lived to its era ! That most sublime of human researches—(the antithesis of baseless phrenology, boast that monstrous imposture who will !—that most petty of thick-skulled whims of the day, with its flagrant *non sequiturs*, its inconsequential theories, its impudent postulates of its very foundation !)—geology—whose *anti-*

quary deals with ruins of worlds, instead of those of towers and human writings or sculpturing; and which yet its professors must smear over with *tongue-honey*, *enliven* with nonsense, to render the (nauseous) grandeur palatable to this most intellectual of ages!

To return to our "Lone Man"—he enjoyed this humbler species of moral melancholy, buried, through half the night, among these most musty-smelling treasures.

He handled deeds with huge dangling seals of discoloured wax, all subscribed by anxious, eager hands, "whose very dust was gone," to these proofs of claim to homes of brick, or wood, or stone, whose very ruins were gone! He read, "In regno Caroli Primi Regis,"—"of what?" said he, with his half-cynical, half-benevolent smile, to himself, by his midnight lamp,—“of a bloodied and secret hole, somewhere within his own ancestral home of Windsor!—of some feet depth of burning lime—that horrid shroud that received him mangled, for the quicker utter annihilation of the royal frontispiece!—of a bleeding heart, a hunted life, hideous death, and an ambiguous memory! Yet, quoth the lying parchment—"Dei Gratiâ Regis Magnæ Brit.!" &c. &c.—

There lay, worm-eaten, more lowly touches of the pathos of decay and mutability. To preserve proofs of births, or lives, here he found preserved the most homely scrawls, yet *now* affecting—

“Our dear little ——— has just cut her first tooth.”

“This comes, my dear mother, to let you know I am safe through my travail, praised be God, and as well as can be expected.”

Coming down to recent days, he read over the “news” in the provincial papers thus saved, but with huge chasms in the dates.

In one he read,

“Extraordinary Series of criminal Trials in a town of the Continent, Troxi” (misspelt for Troki, Lithuania).

The date of this he found to be recent—within a very few years of his then present reading.

Searching for some sequel to what he found very exciting to curiosity, he read at but a short distance of date in his own (rather his late uncle’s own) town’s newspaper—for it had one—the following notice, which seemed to

connect the parties implicated in those trials, with a couple not very long landed in Wales, whom he resolved to *haunt* if possible. But going round the city at dusk to make a few inquiries, he could gain no clue at all to the couple named in what follows. Fresh people were come to the Falcon—the town's people never observed the travellers—so, though it occurred but some three, four, or five years (whichever it might be) before, he remained master of just so much of the secret, and no more, as the following commonplace paragraphs of the Chester Chronicle afforded.

“Chester.—Lately passed through this place two persons believed to be the same whose extraordinary trials at the bar of criminal law, somewhere abroad, caused so much curiosity, and remained involved in so much mystery, at least so far as regarded the real perpetrator of the murders. The lady, (if this be really the unfortunate daughter who has sacrificed so much to love,) looked dreadfully pale, but very beautiful; but that might be from the sea-sickness, she having been very ill in a stormy passage. She has the Jewess-look, but is fair notwithstanding. The young man had a look of deep dejection, for a bridegroom rather

strange, but other ways showed much attention.

“They did never quit their inn, (the Falcon) from their coming, which was by post-horses along coast from Conwy, until they did depart, both times under cloud of night; first, after night-fall, and second, before dawn. They are said to be seeking some deep retirement among the mountains of Wales.”

This fragment did not fail to arouse all the curiosity of our Hermit Errant. His next step was to procure a sight of what few journals of news the limited press of that day afforded. But he was obliged to rest with his first-found news of second-hand in the country journal. From that he found that a female and a young man had in quick succession been placed at the criminal bar (the latter twice); that a double apostacy in religion, double crime, involving violent suspicion of murder—fearful penance under the Judaic Law, with all the darker madness of love in despair,—all attached to this very young man, when plunged, or plunging into this vortex of tragical passions and catastrophes, out of which (it appeared by the fragment) he had come, not unscathed yet alive, with the partner of his love if not his guilt, to

hide their heads in the wildness of woods, and such peace as the peace of mountains may have in store for bosoms such as theirs.

It will be the work of the following pages to give some "passages" of their lives, prior to this (apparent) flight to a distant land, where possibly the "Lone Man" will be found to have at last come up with them—perhaps to witness fresh tragedies still arising out of those they sought to leave behind, with the friends and hopes of native land, inasmuch as such aim is usually frustrated.

But a yet further introduction is needful, (ere entering on their story,) touching a curious superstitious practice not very long obsolete in Wales.

THE LAST "SIN-EATER" OF WALES.

A SKETCH,

INTRODUCTORY TO THE FRAGMENTS OF THE
LIFE, &c. OF JULIAN ACOSTA.

So late as the earlier part of the last century, that strange character of a stranger superstition, known by the name of "The Sin-Eater," was not unknown in Wales. This was some desperate being, who, (unless we suppose him an unbeliever) being past redemption, lost to all hope of salvation, did for a slight reward, or to gratify the relatives of one lying dead, take on his own soul all the sins of the deceased by a formal act, sometimes receiving confessions during life, and bargaining for the burthens thus to be imposed on his already laden soul.

Mr. Fosbroke, in an account of the town of Ross, quotes a letter, I forget by whom, (but I have an idea by Mr. Kyrle, the "Man of Ross,") which describes a "Sin-Eater," who "lived by Ross highway," and is described as a "gaunt, ghastly, lean, miserable, poor rascal."

If we consider these persons as probably not

less believers than those who employed them, it is not easy to imagine a condition of the mind more terrific, desolate, and desperate, than theirs; thus more and more removed from the hope of mercy with every death, and assurance of perdition doubly sure.

A gentleman who lived a little before the time of this dark superstition becoming obsolete, gives us this brief account of what is believed to have been the last "Sin-Eater of Wales."

"I got lost," says he, "near nightfall, after being landed by the ferry-boat from the Aber of Dovey, on the Cardiganshire side of that estuary. A black turbary of great extent divided me from the road. I was to gain that between Penyboat village and Machyulleth town. I was cautioned to ride far round this pitchy morass, for no horse ever ventured among the peat pits—the whole being a quaking morass. In truth its look was enough, under a black evening, to keep me off, even without peril of being swallowed, man and horse. It forms a great brown-black triangle of land, without a tree, or any vegetation but patches of gorse. Yet the piles of *mawn* (all fetched away by persons on foot) diversified the dismalness with a sort of low walls, and between was gleaming of some water, from the many holes whence

it is dug. Till the moon went down, which lit me a space, I could just distinguish these dismal pools and cuts like canals, by its glimmer. I never saw ought so dismal in my own country as this great turbary of hollow ground looked, a huge green-roofed pit, the pitchy mud thus betraying itself every where, as the large moon, looking red as blood in a foul fog stagnating all over it, took leave of it, and its brown grew browner, and that browner black, till the last to be seen was one horrid blackness, where nothing lived, and nothing was heard but the low roar of the sea washing it on two sides, like the hum of some great city. That deep-voiced murmur of the sea so sounding like a thousand voices, made it more shocking to look upon, the space between, as dumb as a great grave. More than once I thought a light glimmered in the very midst, but I took it for the Jack-a-lantern, if not something worse, for I had heard of Wreckers, and there had been a shipwreck, the weather wild, and even the day had been hardly light.

“ At last, thanks to my stars, the good hard rock of a rough road rung to my horse’s hoof, and I saw a pleasant cottage taper instead of that will-o’-wisp of the black bog, which was as ghastly as the Canwyll Corph, the corpse-

candle, carried by a figure of one (as these Welsh say,) whose own burial will soon take place, in the spot it vanishes at. The house was on a high point and turn of road, overlooking all those many acres of hollow ground. Just as I came up, hoping lodging, I heard sounds of wailing within, and soon a woman came out into the dead night, late as it was, and cried a name to the top pitch of her wild voice, that seemed one I had heard weeping indoors. When I looked in, there lay a corpse of a man, with a plate of salt holding a bit of bread, placed on its breast. The woman was shouting to the Sin-Eater to come and do his office—that is, to eat the bread, lay his hand on the dead breast, place the dead man's on his own, after making a sign of the Cross, and then praying for a transfer of whatever pains or penances in fire or “thick-ribbed ice,” or molten lead, or what beside monastic belief attached to the perdition of tormented souls, from that pardoned dead man for ever, to him that more than dead alive, himself in his death of soul, but not of its pains, for ever and for ever.”

This is the traveller's account of this incident.

He had the curiosity to wait, and saw at last

the motion of what seemed a foggy meteor moving toward their standing point. After waiting long, he caught a far-out shout in reply to the woman's long unanswered, till she kindled on the high road's point, the straw of her husband's late bed—the usual signal of a death in the house.

The Sin-Eater, he was told, lived alone in a hovel made of sea-wreck, and nails of such, between sea-marsh and that dim bog, where few could approach by day, none dared by night; whether for the footing, or the great fear, or at least awe, which all felt of that recluse. One curious belief was current, that he was no other than "The Wandering Jew"—the man who spit on his Saviour, and cannot die—that fable familiar to so many countries.

Now as this traveller and the wretched being he stood in the dark and wind expecting, will be hereafter returned to, to avoid double description, this sketch may conclude, whose only purpose was to explain the character of a Sin-Eater of Wales, and the habits of one.

ELEMENTS OF TRAGEDY.

TEMPTATIONS, TRIALS, FALL AND DEATH OF
THE SOUL OF JULIAN ACOSTA.

CHAPTER I.

JULIAN IN TEMPTATION.

“ I had then in the face of God and Man abjured the faith of all my fathers, and passed into the Communion of the feeble, despised and persecuted Few. There were moments when I could not help suspecting that I had done wrong.”—*Valerius, a Roman Story.* *Troxi.*

JULIAN ACOSTA was on this day put on his trial at the Criminal Court of the above town, charged with burglary in the night, and attempt to murder, in the house of Barabbas Mosheim, a Polish Jew, and pearl merchant, and with stealing a certain iron-box and its contents, of trifling value. The violence arose out of a scuffle with a domestic in the dark, during which a pistol went off, and desperately wounded the latter, who came armed with it, to secure the prisoner. The latter excited much interest from the fact of the merchant's being his guar-

dian, who, as reported, had ill-used the youth, now just of age, by not only keeping him, who was an orphan, in a neglected and abject state, labouring in his garden, through his nonage, but now also by withholding his fortune, or at least so perplexing the affairs of his little estate, as to render him liable to arrest, should he venture to accept it. Moreover, it was whispered that the Jew's only daughter was once betrothed to this young man with his consent, and capriciously afterwards forbidden to him :—(*not capriciously*, it will presently appear.) During the long course of circumstantial evidence by which it was sought to establish the identity of the masked robber and the prisoner at the bar, this young woman, veiled and continually weeping, (though she believed her emotion concealed,) sat with a female friend in a dark corner of our Court, under a heavy projection supporting the gallery. The father, often as he passed, was remarked to stop, and, in a trembling rage, seemingly to rate the unhappy girl for her pity.

The smallness of the amount charged as stolen, excited surprise. It came out that the old man, provident against such contingency, had forestalled craft with craft, and always kept some worthless imitation stones in that

strong box stolen, that any domestic or outdoor robber might fix there for his prey, while his real gems, &c. were deposited, none but his daughter knew where ; by which he would have escaped compulsion to produce them to any resolute robber.

The unfortunate young man was stated to have been not even taught to read, or but recently taught by stealth, such had been the cruel policy of the Jew, who had had the rearing him from three years old. Yet his looks, as he stood arraigned, were intensely expressive of mind and feeling, and his deportment had a sort of wild grace. A deep and dreadful melancholy (evidently resisted, rather than indulged for effect sake,) sat on his very fine features. Indeed, his rolling eye had a fire in it frequently, as he looked round the crowd, that seemed to defy rather than affect their pity. Some called this the boldness of innocence, others the boldness of hardened guilt, but all felt its power to interest. But it was the contrast to this afforded by its habitual expression, one of extreme mournful softness, as it almost constantly rested on that shadowed nook where sat Magdalene Mosheim, the daughter. Twice, when the evidence of the partially-recovered wounded man (brought in in a chair,) bore

fearfully on the prisoner, an audible yet smothered low moan came from under a long black veil, in the corner mentioned. And then only (it was noticed) some drops, forced out by agony, stood on the prisoner's pallid forehead, ample and fair, notwithstanding the profusion of raven-black hair round. Those he just dashed off with his hand, but the tear which gathered (*then* only,) in each eye, as he too caught that sound, he was too proud to betray to the whole court, by dashing away also; so it gathered, till it fell ere he could prevent it—and still he never altered muscle, as if hoping one solitary drop might fall undetected.

When the whole evidence for the crown was gone through, and the prisoner's witnesses, if any, were called for, none appeared. Yet it had been stated that an *alibi* would be attempted to be proved. Then a legal gentleman who had been employed on behalf of the accused, (not without creating a very strong impression against him, it being known that this able limb of the law never exerted himself without most ample remuneration, and the youth Julian being kept almost penniless by the Jew,) this gentleman then craved time for production of his witnesses, who he pretended could swear to the prisoner's being in bed at a house in the

suburbs, on the night of the capital crime laid to his charge. Consequently, as it drew near night, the trial was postponed till the morning."

To this record shall now be added, some brief account of these parties, in this interval of their retirement.

Julian Acosta was of a Roman Catholic family, but left an orphan by his father, dying in the service of the Jew. The latter had pursued his vocation in the East, ere he settled in Lithuania ; and, having suffered persecution and tyranny, began to practise the lesson learnt so painfully as soon as he was in a situation to do so, and almost secluded his child, and quite enslaved his ward. The result was, that neither would have dreamed of daring even a look at the other, *in his sight*. Besides this, poor Julian was excluded her society, and condemned to that of domestics ; and as his pride grew with his growth, disdaining theirs, he was forced on solitude, upon his own uncultivated mind, little able as that was to supply a resource against its own vacancy. Hence, thought alone was left to the solitary boy ; a perilous soul-mate when thus ranging wholly without guide !

Then he was of another creed, and the Sabbath of the father and daughter, his nominal friends, was not his Sabbath, nor his theirs. He pined out the dull Saturday (*their* holiday) in a constrained respectful quietude, which the old man of course did not repay by equal deference to the Sabbath of our young Nazarene.

The first symptom by which, unknown to themselves, the two young persons, thus divided under one roof, betrayed some approximation, was by a covert but unaffected respect of each to the other's Lord's Day. At last, the lowly youth used to venture a stealthy visit (the father absent) to the synagogue, not *with* his "young mistress," as her father always called her, but dropping in, to watch her in the beautiful attitude of devotion.

But an unlooked-for death of one young, now brought a splendid change to Julian's prospects. A very rich, very old aunt, a violent papist, transferred to him the reversion of all her wealth. She hated her natural heir, and had heard of and pitied the harsh treatment Julian met under the strange guardian to whom chance and sudden mortality had consigned him; but not a shilling would she afford him *before* her death, lest he should respect her memory less by that shilling no doubt. Julian's hereditary resource was but

humble, even had the Jew acted more generously ; but now, when this disposition of his aunt was made known to him, he began to venture a *thought* toward the beautiful young Jewess. The most timid *look* was long in venturing to follow ; and when it did, alas ! it met—if not a reproof from her eye, perhaps too gentle for such expression, (for she had a *fair* eye and complexion, albeit just touched with the *Judaical* cast of countenance,) yet a reply fatal as reproof, or rather utter negation of reply—a cold graveness that would not or could not understand the half-said language of his. If ever it spoke at all, it seemed to say, “Why does the youth Julian look peculiarly at the maid Magdalene ? He whose Messiah is not her Messiah ? whose God is the scoff of her tribe and her fathers ? whose path of life and her’s must divide so soon ? ”

In fact, their early-imposed, immeasurable distance in all things, was become nature itself to them—she as a Jewish heiress, he as an anomalous *poor* refugee of her father’s house, neither strictly attached to the upper or lower division of it, running wild, but ever under the spell of the eastern sort of protection afforded him, an awe mixed with heart-burnings and revolt. All the *awe* was extended also to his

“young mistress,” but heart-meltings, but a delighted obedience, (were it but in waiting on her,) too soon toward her became the accompaniment of that awe. The old man’s absence made not the least difference in their mode of intercourse. This second nature operated as effectually as his own furrowed, copper-hued, keen-eyed, vivacious mummy of a face observing them, in keeping order in their constrained intercourse.

Julian did not know that she was under the strongest obligatory form of a Jewish oath, to never marry a Christian, which her father had caused to be imposed on her in the face of the synagogue: had he demanded a vow of vestal seclusion for life, his daughter would have as little dreamed of resistance. And old Barabbas loved her for her passive obedience—her tenderness, (which did not wholly lack return from him,) her innocence and beauty, and above all, her strict allegiance to Judaism; for the more wrong and contumely he had borne for his faith, just so much more love he bore to it, in the spirit of all martyrs to all creeds.

Magdalene one day missed a book treating of Jewish tenets, and found it in Julian’s hand, as he used to spend his long lonely summer even-

ings, under an aged box-tree in the garden, close upon a beautiful lake, the tree visible from her chamber window.

A softening of conscious pleasure with melancholy stole into the expression of her *too* expressive eye, when she received the book from the lad's hand, colouring to the eyes, and stammering some apology. How long had the poor youth taught himself, or been' taught to read? While pleased at the surprise, some indignation against her father mixed with her pity towards this shamefully neglected boy. What though his father, an Irish adventurer, had been only driver of camels, and sort of overseer of slaves to her father? (He had been redeemed by him from captivity in Barbary, at the price of the greater part of a small property in Dublin, which would otherwise have devolved on his child Julian, born to him during his own and wife's slavery, owing to a shipwreck.) Thus she thought. It was a niggard mercy to redeem the parent only to enslave his offspring. The mother died in giving him birth.

It was the absence of hope—the want of an atmosphere that love could live in, which alone made a passion, long lighted, burn thus faintly in their bosoms.

No sooner did the father (whether urged by zeal of proselytism, or a view to the youth's fresh prospect of riches), hint obscurely that it was a pity the boy Julian was not "one of them," fixing his small soul-piercing eye on his child, and then adverting to herself, as of an age to aid in perpetuating God's chosen people—than an ashey paleness, indicative of intense emotion, overspread her face—but a troubled sort of joy preceded it, that almost thanked him through her faint eyes, for fainter, glassier they grew the idea of Julian's study of works on her religion perhaps flashing on her mind—till, covering her confusion by complaint of illness, she was in a swoon on the floor, ere the father could suspect the tumult he had roused in her long-shut bosom. The astonishment of a tender hope, and even more, thus suddenly flashed on her previous patient smothered despair, it was that thus overpowered her.

Streams, whose severing dykes are cut through—light, in two apartments suddenly thrown into one—never rushed, and became one and indivisible, more rapidly than the long-divided loves of those young bosoms! Never did a Lapland spring convert the dark and death of Polar winter, into all the luxury of vegetable, of aerial life, the meekly green earth, and the

palely blue sky, in their exquisite tenderness of tint—never did such leap of the sweet season out of its grave, throw out such an Eden of flowers on that Earth's bosom, as did that permitted burst of passion seem to call forth in each of theirs! Yet were they almost as quiet, as distant as before in their intercourse—but the *feeling*! Alas! for its brief ecstasy. Magdalene grew pensive, though knowing that he whom she had long loved, (the more for the unworthy treatment by her father) was now training his mind's convictions toward *her* faith for *her* sake. They read together, she becoming his instructress—and never parted for an hour, without a secret pain, like that of two parting for a year.

CHAPTER II.

JULIAN IN THE HEART'S MADNESS.

“The voices sounded both awful and sweet in the breathless calm of midnight. The tall black trees stood all round, like a wall cutting us off from the world, and the thoughts of the world. The moon steady overhead in the serene blue sky, seemed to shower down light and beauty upon nothing in the wide world but that little guarded space of our seclusion.”—
VALERIUS.

ALAS for Man's hopes! Alas—not for Hope's false promises only, but her *true*! Fulfilment as often baffles our joys, as their disappointment itself. Expectation runs away with all the bliss; and reality itself, when it comes, has to take back, and damp and sober our portion of delight, instead of bringing more, and adding glow and intensity.

The young Jewess grew very pensive as the process of her lover's apostacy secretly advanced. Secretly—for the old man made himself no di-

rect party to the conversion. She seemed to shrink into herself, mused much, grew pale, and her appetite failed. It was by moonlight in the antique alcove, half yew-tree and half ivied wall, close to the lake, in the Jew's absence from home, that her feelings were at last poured forth, and into his bosom.

"Julian!" she broke forth, "Julian! *dear* Julian, you shall not abandon your God for *me*! An apostate! Oh, I cannot bear it! It were fitter I should come to *you*, Julian. I to *your* God, than you to mine. For the love of God, look t'other side the tree, that my father be not listening! I should but find a Saviour, I should forsake none—we both acknowledge *this*," said she, laying her delicate hand with its jewels, on the Old Testament—"but *you*, oh you, at your soul's peril, must forsake *your* hopes. Ah, Julian, shall I confess to you how I've looked on the pictures of that meek God-man, by stealth? Mild as sunset, benignant like very God, patient—like—ah no! beyond, very man—the Saviour in his gaze, the Saviour in his life, the Saviour in his very ghastliness, with that glorified poor head aside on the shocking Cross, and then more glorified, more like heaven's setting sun than ever. Ah, Julian! what am *I*, that you should abandon him for

me?—for *me*, a poor perishable thing of a day!”

But the untutored mind of the youth had been left a total void—yet it was vivid, clear, capable of every thing. Hence it received and reflected all hues and shades of things, but retained nothing of all, like water or a mirror, so that he was prompt to be deceived and deceive others. His young mistress was *now* the sweet deity of his heart, and he grew generous and gentle like her, but wished no deity beside. All he desired was, to but convince himself enough of the truth of *her* faith, to be a Jew without being a hypocrite, because only as a Jew could he become hers. But this sudden proof that his conversion was not pleasing to her, struck a strange damp to his heart.

“My dear mistress knows,” he answered rather sullenly, “that my only preacher and teacher has been that sun in the sky, and my school this great garden, and a grand green country. That told me there’s a God too in that heaven; and while I worked all day in your father’s garden, I could ’nt see an ugly seed, after rotting almost to dirt, shoot up a great flower with a gold disk, almost like a little image of that sun face to face with it, without learning that only a God could do that strange thing. I could not pick up the

acorn, and hold it 'twixt finger and thumb, and know *it* held a thousand years' life, within its little cup and ball, without learning that only God could hide that enormous tree so cunningly in that compass!—nothing but God could be at once so great and so little! I saw him in the sun and the seed and the acorn—but a Messiah came in nothing, neither saw I yours nor ours. But this I know, that what you believe I will!—what danger *you* run, *I* 'll run!—what *your* soul may suffer, mine be *glad* to suffer!”

“Ah, Julian, but I half—hark! speak softly—I half believe in ——”

“Christ? Believe *quite*, dear creature! I do *not* forsake him, dearest—if I seem to turn *from* him, it is but my turning to you. What risk can I run in serving God as *you* do?”

“Ah, you must hear him scoffed at—denied—reviled—what hypocrisy!—and you are frank and noble, Julian, and you must become false either to him or to us; for you are to become as one of those who crucified him.”

Julian was silent, and his lip quivered. He felt he must tear Christianity from his very heart, or be a perjured hypocrite, or never be her husband. A flood of tears gave vent to his fresh-wakened remorse in this farewell to Religion.

“I cannot help it now,” he said, pulling her white arm over his neck, as if there were in it protection against the very bolt of heaven. “I cannot help it now! I am but a poor ignorant youth—He will pardon, you see—” and he drew out his small crucifix, and studied the expression of the dying yet still meek face—“how merciful he is drawn! Could he hurt *you—you?* But I will be what you *are*, and forget all else. I’ll inquire, I’ll read!—I *will* be a Jew yet—not a hypocrite. There’s but a part of my belief to be forsworn—we will cling to *our* Moses and the Prophets the more faithfully—you must, too, and think no more of idle pictures, or such a thing as *this!*”

While he still eyed the crucifix (the single gift his aunt ever had sent to him)—but now looking at it with a bravadoing scorn, “*These* are my saving arms, not those!” cried the wild creature of Feeling (passing his hand along the polish of the *warm* living ivory of *her’s*, while the holy figure’s seemed pathetically extended to him in vain!) “These will bless me living, hold me dying! my heart will not fail me, my God will not forsake me, while *you* hold me, weep over me, when we cry together, or die together! God the Father, *our* Father still will pity me,

pardon me, if for such a gift as that most precious heart, which you bestow on *me*, I even give *you* up my God! even His beloved Son!"

Julian thenceforth set himself, with a sort of fury, to the task of self-conversion to Judaism. He procured the works of the free-thinking accomplished Jew, Moses Mendelshom, and incurred the danger of becoming a Deist in ceasing to be a Christian. He persevered, and was admitted, with all form, as a convert to the Synagogue, with his guardian's sanction.

He had not long become a Jew, when he received intelligence that his aged aunt had died, and had previously been informed (by one interested in her will) that her nephew had turned Jew. She had, he learned, in lieu of her fortune, now bequeathed him the price of a halter, "that he might (as ran the words of the will) buy himself the means of fully following out the example he had chosen to follow, that of Judas, as a traitor to his Saviour."

This was a severe blow for Julian, who had reason to hope that his relative, a very old and

secluded woman, might not, before she died, have heard of his apostasy.

But a severer stroke was in reserve. This was the marked change in the old merchant's treatment of him. From shewing him almost the favour (however still severely, and with an ill grace) of a son-in-law, he returned to his old habit of silence and distance toward him as to a menial. Julian might have borne this, but for what it indicated, soon further proved by the girl's assuring him that her father designed her hand for one of his own tribe.

But would they, already betrothed, submit to this cruel separation? Julian had already, for her sake, forfeited his high fortune, and must he lose *her* too? No—*his* hereditary means, small though they were, remained. He would ere long be of age to claim it. He dared not boldly urge a clandestine marriage, had it been practicable. But they read together Shakspeare's plays, and he read to her (for she had been indefatigable in her tuition of the poor youth) the scene of Jessica's flight, and again and again, always watching her face. At that part she coloured deep at first, afterwards always sighed, once burst into tears, where the father's grief and rage wishes his child in her coffin. From all signs, the love-passionate

child of Nature soon understood, ere a word was exchanged—that she but waited to be his, till he should attain his majority.

But Julian, unlike his namesake of old, found no solace in superstitious zeal, under the remorse of his apostasy. He rather sought relief in total infidelity. Eager to vindicate to himself his own renouncement of his Saviour, he devoured all the atheistical works he could hear of; which, of course, equally unsettled his new with his forsaken faith. In fact, he had soon desisted from his first romantic *wish* to become a sincere Jew, finding it an easier task to please his mistress by a show of reverence for their rites, than to coerce the reasoning faculty into the belief indispensable toward such respect.

As was naturally to be looked for, therefore, Julian became nothing, unless a Deist. In that negation of all religions, he soon grew stubborn, equally by restless remorse, eager for self-vindication, and a real (though secreted) loathing of his new society, to which the old man's money-loving and faithless character, as common to his tribe, and under which he was suffering, seemed owing.

Meanwhile, she who had taught him to read, loved the pleasant task too well to desist from

reading on with him. Julian at first concealed his kind of reading, and long avoided permitting her to enter deeply into the spirit of the acute, fascinating, witty, and dangerous authors whose volumes some freethinking Jews, called Caraites, and one of them, an atheist, privily lent him. Yet insensibly, after chiding, and even crying, in her artless piety—over his first ventured laugh at what she venerated, she grew pleased to see *him* entertained, pleased, laughing, though she never laughed. Then she was of the softest nature, and never having read argument on the subject before, her tender heart could not but incline toward the deistical writer when he rose into indignant daring discussion of those terrible massacres of innocent children, reservings of young women, and sawings asunder of live men, recorded in the Holy Volume. Apart from their character, of an express work of God by human agency, like an earthquake by elemental, these things, of course revolted her whole feminine nature, the moment she began to *think*, as well as read. Unsettled thus, she now read on, eagerly as he had done, but with opposite purpose, to detect fallacy in the author whom she regarded as an adversary, because the foe of her faith.

It were easy to have divined which would re-

main master of the field (of mind), the eloquent dexterous controversialist, or the well-meaning but simple girl.

Julian was, at first, pained by her very endurance of his reading these works ; shocked, the first time of her joining in his laugh, however timidly ; and at last delighted with it, when they boldly conversed on the Pentateuch, the divinity of Moses, &c. because it made them more truly one, because it proved that love made him more influential than the Rabbins or the Talmud.

As Julian's majority approached, the old man betrayed suspicion of his daughter's design, she being now, by Julian's renouncing Christianity, released from the oath by which he had bound her. Prying, and anxious, he at last detected, and by intimidation elicited from his child, the heinous fact that the young Christian he had fostered in his bosom, as he said, had stung his heart through his child, and was not only withdrawing her from the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, but from the God of the Christian—seducing her to devilish Atheism !—that his child, his only child, was on the point of becoming a child of hell, under his arts, the dictates of malice. However sincere was the horror of Barabbas, doubt-

less his satisfaction was equally so, at the advantage this gave him over the now detested *poor* pretender to his daughter's hand. Her reluctant evidence was enforced, and the elders of the Synagogue, formally, and with all the rigour natural under such an outrage, aggravated by such hypocrisy—expelled the new convert, with the utmost ignominy.

Julian ceased to be an inmate of her father's house; his opportunities of seeing her became few; besides this he was straitened for means to live; and it was only in dread of public obloquy that Barabbas did not wholly abandon his expelled ward to starvation. But what was this, or his blighted hope of fortune, to the cruel reflection that now Magdalene was once more cut off from him by an *oath*—an oath, which he not only knew she would not break, but he, infidel as he was, could not have endured that she should break?

Julian, abandoned as he had been from a child to his own mind's resources, resembled in plastic versatility of expedient, indomitable purpose, craft, though not yet cruelty, those few outcasts of the human species, that have been discovered in woods abandoned from infancy, that climb trees, swim like amphibious creatures, and dig food out of the earth, or convert

a hundred unedible things into resource in famine, though beneath civilized men, enjoying much tact, and savage accomplishment which man might envy. He set his untamed, his fierce intellect, strong and dangerous to be irritated, as the long-lonely man-beast of the woods, to now contravene his ancient enemy's master-stroke against his heart and its very life, its hope in love; and that wild heart prostrated itself, in all its haughtiness, like a tiger ere it makes its spring, whose couching has all the exterior marks of *crouching*.

It was to *her* alone he once desired to be upright, to be sincere. But now the question was the loss of her, for the time of his coming of age drew near, and he no longer regarded seeming even to her a hypocrite. Never was the door of the Synagogue thrown open but the wretched, now ragged, weeping, death-pale Julian, was passed at that door, by all who entered, and by all pitied, all eagerly talked about, as the penitent heart-broken for his crime, the lost sheep of the flock of God's chosen people, no sooner received into the fold, than again astray, and no more to be received. This was all his wish, all his prayer, to be again reconciled to the God of Jacob, ere he died. Meanwhile, his wan and wild look bore evi-

dence to his inward pangs, and the truth of this expectancy of early death.

He had indeed broke out into furious invective against the whole race of the Jews, for the bad faith of one, he had “wished their false Messiah, when he should come, to come armed with the besom of destruction to sweep them quite from the face of the earth, that had long denied them a resting-place:”—but this was to Barabbas; and he was not beloved, moreover was known to be averse to the youth, since his aunt’s disinheriting him. And Julian did not spare (nor was he insincere herein) to revile Christianity.

A strong cabal arose in his favour. Pity and Pride made quite a party question of his re-admission. But to this step, strange, and even terrible penances, shames, and vile endurances were quite indispensable. Would that proud untameable spirit he began to betray, the hour that he began to hope—the moment in short a sweet object appeared to excite it, after its long sloth and slumber in the poor labourer of a garden, trampled on by a tyrant—would this spirit submit to those things? He must publicly cry for God’s pardon, confess his enormous faults, imprecate frightful curses on his head, should he ever fall

again ; he must extend his person across the threshold on his hidden face, grovelling as a beast, or the prone worm, for all to trample over him, and lastly, some horrible secret rite must be gone through, in which human blood—* his own—must be used, as a loathsome pledge for his sincerity of repentance. Nothing less than all these, and many more inflictions, were to be endured ere such an offender (an apostate and atheist, and suborner to Atheism) could be made once more a member of the chosen people of God—the aboriginal founders of even Christianity itself, to whose tribe (unworthy word !) no Christian can deny he owes even *his* accepted Messiah.

In spite of Barabbas, the daily spectacle of the young and handsome sinner thus weeping at the door of the fold, procured him at last the *favour* of this fearful ordeal. Magdalene, pitying even to agony, heard the day fixed for his recantation and public shame.

Here we suspended our reading.

* See Life of Uriel Acosta, in the Biographical Dictionary, from which this particular is borrowed, as also the surname of Acosta.

EVENING.

WRITTEN BY THE RURAL DOCTOR.

N.B. TO DR. EDWARD HOGG.

Esteemed Friend,

Growing tired myself of driving the goose-quill, and the commander-in-chief of our caravan being eager to transmit to remotest ages the name, and abode, and many merits, of one of his friends of the mountains (if he may claim the honest honour of such friendship), I do hereby resign to him for this, and perhaps future occasion, the office of penning this evening despatch.

Ever thy Friend,

OSWALD.

From MR. MORGAN's Farm-House,
called the Trossketh,
Near Abergwessyn, Brecknockshire.

Not for the pleasant memory alone of your abode, in the most romantic of dingles—*not* for the peculiar purity and delicate cleanliness of the most excellent entertainment I and my

sons enjoyed at that dwelling of peace profound, beneath a mountain—*not* for the more than *national* hospitality I received at your hands—no!—*not* even *solely* for the incomparable, the inestimable CREAM and butter that an angel might be proud to grease his or her lips with, or a liquorish young cherub to get over nose and ears in, till he should make himself sick—not for each or every of these only, I am eager, worthy and wise (if not *worldly*-wise in a mean sense) and kind-hearted MR. MORGAN, of ABERGWESSYN—to pay you a public tribute of respect—(if these very poor affairs of my Quaker-friend are fated to become *public*.)

With hardly any knowledge of you, I and mine, wandering benighted on the starlight hill-tops, in what Theophilus Jones (slandrous man!) calls “the most wild and *uninhabitable* part of Brecknockshire,” we at last caught the glimmering of light far down, where unseen water-falls were sounding in the dusky solemnity of those fine valleys, rich in pasturage, and watered by rivers “too wildly beautiful to bear a name!” which wind among your native hills thus unworthily spoken of by the historian of Brecknock—caught—and felt a very pleasant leap of our triple heart at the sight. De-

scending, we began to suspect our good stars had directed us to the very farm most noted for hospitality of any in the county—a Mister Morgan's, of the *Trowskaeth*—or some such name. (I can't be sure I spell it right: I will write it a hundred ways, good Mr. M., that I may *hit* on the right way.) A grand rude rock in front, overhung by trees, formed a finer portal to your "castle," to my taste, than the carved bears in stone, of Bradwardine (not Bradwardine between Hay and Hereford, but a baron's house in a certain novel by one something "Scott").

The roaring gloom of our steep descent by many water-courses, was fine and solemn. Then rose your respectable house—no *mansion*, but something vastly better. Your dogs, not quite dragons, were overcome—our voices heard through theirs—but I no sooner heard the quiet tone and perfect good humour with which you, from the ample chimney-nook, ordered the horses of strangers (or those almost such,) to be "put in" for the night—(at almost the shameful late hour of ten)—I say, I no sooner found this true gentility, proved by making no sort of disturbance with us, who thus disturbed you, (not even by a *fuss* of politeness,) than I knew our good stars *had* so

guided us, and we had reached the house of the Mr. Morgan, of the *Trussgyth*. (*Is that right spelt, dear Mr. Morgan? I'll spell it many more ways yet.*)

“But lest some malicious fool should not understand the good-humoured flow of nonsense from me, set running by sincere goodwill and esteem—no more drolling!

“Here then, I shall suppose myself writing in the small, but almost too well furnished room of the Trowskyth. (*Is not that it, Mr. Morgan?*) Our kind host had breakfasted before we were up, so he (too little knowing of my rustic taste) had our meal set out in the parlour—a spotless table-cloth, excellent tea and cakes, and—in a word, a *Scottish* breakfast—a praise which they who have broken their fast in the North will well understand. The morning was sweet and balmy: the early sunshine slept mild along the clean straw fold, and on the great green banks that confine our window prospect, and the bright leaves of many trees almost roofing the house, (the house in a mountain, one might name it,) were in charming unison with the peace of a well-ordered household within—a peace by no means to be looked for in *every* Welsh farm, any more than the delicious cleanliness I have

described at *this*, is to be hoped for in all—I wish I could say it is in *many*!

“*En passant*—Worthy Welsh housewives, why, in the name of Nastiness, do you force all your customers to eat after your delicate fingers, clutching your market-butter in your white *paws* out of your basket? If a knife *is* beyond your means to bring to town, bring a good pure green *skewer*, bring anything rather than human fingers—it’s a *savage* trick, a Hottentot brutality, my dear housewives! However, if you are too Welshly-wise to take copy from all England and all decency, we’ll petition Parliament to supply you with *pocket handkerchiefs*. It’s too hard to ask ye to buy them for yourselves.

“Mr. M. is a man of ‘woolly wealth,’ and golden too, I’ve pleasure for his sake in saying. His gold was coined in this fine grassy *Mint*, among the pastoral mountains; and to his honour, has not altered his patriarchal virtues and simplicity of life, and never will. If it be agreeable to point out the most pleasing features of a country, it is more so to notice the more beautiful *human* features—the fine green welcome and welcoming *oasis* in that rather arid and miserable sort of country, ‘The Purple Island,’ as a fine old writer calls Man.

“ I perceive too late that I have thus written a Morning instead of an Evening—a slight mistake. However, to make amends, I will sketch an Evening, (or an hour of one,) spent under the roofs of those people whose wealth *has* vitiated the simplicity of their native character; people who, risen from the very same source of success as my worthy host’s, and with not a whit more pretension to aristocracy, yet stalk upon their stilts high enough to divide them from their own good honest happy sphere, the farmer’s, without reaching the sphere whose manners they emulate, so move in an uneasy sort of excommunication between both. I point at no *one* such family, ’tis a mere flying sketch. Respectable, but limited means, acquired in a humble sphere, uplifts these people like a little column, not a pyramid—a slight elevation, based on dirty earth still; but they, fancying themselves quite aeronauts — quite “ *Cambro-Britannos orbe divisos*,”—that is, from the *lower* world — looking down upon everybody, everybody of course looks Lilliputian compared to themselves: they are ignorant of their own delusion. Meanwhile, *they* shew just as little to those below, but they are not aware of that; and as to the angels above, it’s probable they rank them on their stone

perch much on a par with the groundlings. Just so the really High Life regards as equal them and those *they* despise.

“ So, for the ‘ Evening.’

“ ‘ I ’ll be hanged if I will,’ I said, dashing down the pen. After such kindly pleasant recollections as those of The *Troswowkwth*, (surely *that*’s it, Mr. Morgan?) from a pure and temperate use of wealth, it’s painful to turn to pride converting handsome competence into poverty, by trying to screw it up to the scale of rank. Oh, those unfortunate horses, doomed to both plough and *the* carriage—the petty, painful, anxious punctilio!—the uneasy struggle to ‘ be at ease,’ like folk of fashion!—the shivery ordeal of the unlucky visitor, clapped up in ‘ the pound ’ of a vast, fine, cold, damp, but brilliant-stoved room, with its polished tables, its most orderly books, too tight to let one be pulled down, to the endangering the virgin white of their leaves—there for indefinite time to feast his eyes on the polish of the impudent tongs, swaggering a-kimbo, plump where the fire ought to be—or after exclaiming, ‘ a plague on both your grates,’ (a black and a bright, and the devil a coal in either,)—to turn to the card-rack, (delightful reading!) where not one letter is seen to come in a vulgar way ;

nothing but franks! franks! franks! It may be an M.P., nay, a Lord, indites, as well as franks, one of those glories of the marble mantel-shelf; especially, if he is a member for an open borough; it's ten to one but *this* will be found by mere hurry thrust *open* into the rack. Oh, all these glories—I say, how they shrink before *your* quiet welcome, *your* pleasant chat of your young lambs, green grain, or disasters to flocks in snow; *your* glowing fine fire for a benighted traveller; your gratuitous bed, if *not* down, as soft! Yes! even that wondrous *pound* of a 'best parlour,' is really not *quite* so comfortable as your little breakfast parlour in the July sun!—under rock and wild tree, Mr. Morgan of—The Troskth (I'll try it *short* this time!)

“And as to literary affairs: although the *letter-rack* I confess must be deemed a literary affair, why really the live specimens of that pompous home are 'not a whit' better versed in *actual* literature than you are. But *you* pretend not to it. Why follow the unlucky *pounded* biped up to the honour of the audience in the state apartment? Possibly it may be redolent of tobacco; a spitting-box may peep; but oh, it's most imposing! The lady or ladies lisp and languish the very thing;

the very pink of *bon ton* is in 'all their steps'— I was going to say on their cheeks, but the happy dairy-*taint* (as they deem it,) in their blood, secures them that *natural* charm perhaps. Neither is a blue stocking actually a monster in such families. I record here that a young lady, and one with a very sweet face too, observed to me, 'What an amiable man was Mr. Christopher North!'

" 'I never met or saw Professor Wilson,' I remarked.

" 'Mr. *North*, Sir; old Mr. *North* I was talking of.'

" I drew in my horns, and took care to say no more.

" Again she expatiated on the beauties of 'The Lady of the Lake,' wondered if the Waverley Novels were Walter Scott's, and talked so delightfully behind the day, that I felt transported back into my young days, and their expectation of that very poem. And how could I help being *transported* too, with such a sweet oblivion of a gulf of years?

" But as I soon tire of prose, I shall select some scrap from my 'Anthology of Poets Unknown,' to finish off this Evening.

THE TWO SUICIDES,

AND

THEIR FUNERALS.

I saw a light, at dead of night,
In a winter-wood's strewed nakedness,
Where three old roads, from men's abodes
Far, met in their green forsakenness ;
Still glided that mysterious lamp,
Revealed, as one by one
It passed, in vapoury damp,
Each tree-trunk's skeleton ;
Then stopped—another look,
And—oh, the terrible !
The death-rite without book !
The burial without bell !
And the white death without a shroud !
And black blood round the lolling head,
So passive to the hawling crowd !
The shocking drooping of the dead.
Deep, deep, those rude and blind
Had dug their brother's bed,
Who dared, in their dark mind,
To deem his *soul* too dead.
Deep as ten graves almost,
(Despair his deadly sin !)
To shut the fiend, or ghost,
With his damnation, in.
Dull souls ! untouched till th' horrid stake

Pierced the poor breast that felt not it ;—
 'Till a dead blow sounded down the pit,
 Like th' echo of a far earthquake,
 As down the heavy death
 Went—with such sullen force
 As would have beat out breath,
 And made—had it not been—a corse !
 Then a little shudder ran
 Through their hard hearts, and there was stillness :
 Those, ignorant of Man,
 Of all but *fleshly* illness,
 Could feel for flesh though dead, yet not
 For *mind*, though pierced and bruised alive !
 And soon alone by that dread spot,
 Deep in dead leaves, I stood ; Man's lot
 Revolving—Being's sad prerogative.

2.

I saw a corpse with plume and pall,
 Placed on a bier in th' holy aisle :
 A low voice there was praying— all
 Round, reverential silence all.
 Something I heard of ' our dear brother '—
 His soul to God commended,
 (Who like that outcast other
 His own worse life had ended,)
 Torn up, the Temple's stone
 Lets *this* self-murderer in ;
 No mansion but God's own
 Must hold him with his sin ;
 His filthy sin ! *this* wretch unpained,
 Ungoaded, chose *his* deadly bliss ;
That hollow-hearted and wild-brained,
 In madness and in misery—his.

Pain tore his heart asunder ;
Death was temptation sore ;
“ A moment’s unheard thunder,
And all this pain is o’er ! ”
He thought—and still he bore, and bore.
Till, one dark moment, faint
Nature gave way—could bear no more—
And Heaven just lost a saint.
Self-murder’s *mode* shall God regard,
The swift or slow ?—on cup or tool,
The liquid death or leaden hard,
Is Heaven or Hell suspended ? Fool !
Thus mused I in that aisle—that other
And this, both in Thought’s sight ;
Bloated, wine-purpled, *this* “ *dear brother*,”
That in his wasted white,
Till Thought was speech, and speech was wrath—
And down through those disturbed aisle-stones
I cried, “ What do ye in man’s path
To God’s own presence ? Up, vile bones !
Or, if of this place worthy,
Make room for him who sleeps,
Brute-like, in his death-prison earthy,
For whom none prays or weeps ! ”

CHAPTER III.

JULIAN IN PENANCE.

"It is my fate,
That either I must die, or you must love."

FOND.

THE place where these incidents occurred, was the town of Troki, (misspelt Troxi in the old newspaper,) a former residence of the Dukes of Lithuania, "delightfully situated on a peninsula, formed on the beautiful lake Bressal. The ruins of one of the ancient ducal palaces are still visible on one of the green islands that spot the surface of the lake. The greater part of the peninsula is high ground, and the natural scenery round the lake is very fine."*

In the ruinous suburbs of this antiquated place is a colony of that sect of Judaism called Caraites, one very small in number, and the fiercer under the mortification, against the vast majority, the Rabbinical Jews. The latter regard the Caraites as utter renegadoes, on account of their total rejection of the

* Dr. Pinkerton, in the Fifteenth Report of the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews.

traditions, which, under the name of the Mishna, form the Rabbinical code of ecclesiastical and civil law, and with the addition of the Gemaras, (that is, the interpretations of the doctors) completes the Talmud. The traditions, it is perfectly well known (*by the Rabbins*) were given to Moses at the same time with the law, direct from God, albeit they remained like the Ossianic poems, merely oral treasures not committed to stone or paper, till two centuries after Christ.

The Caraites scoffing at this grand sheet-anchor of the Jewish faith, a deadly hatred is always alive between the more powerful body and this daring dissenting offshoot.

The former have a saying—"If a Caraites hope to be received into our tribe, let him first turn Mahometan or Christian, then there's a chance for him." The main body also, including all the writers, has the advantage over the spirited few, which the man had over the lion, in the fable. The world is acquainted with the Caraites only through the writings of their bitterest enemies. The *Odium Theologicum* is as much in vogue among the recusants as the grateful receivers of a religion of "peace and good will toward men."

The residence of Magdalene's father, who was a Rabbinist, was in the town, but he had a sort

of summer-house on one of the islands in the lake, a mere plot of grassy ground, shadowed by fine trees, and dotted with picturesque little knolls of weather-stained stone, crept over by ivy. The erecting a room here was one of the old man's few fond indulgences to his child. The islet was accessible even by swimming, and it was but a row of a few minutes to transport him or her into a profound cell like an anchoret's—a stone building almost hidden by foliage and tree-heads of such closely woven boughs as to keep a sort of delicious cool night under the noon-sun. From the rude lattice, however, was seen the quiet lake flashing light, and heaving silvery, and its bordering bold shores, and versts on versts of pastoral or more vivacious scenery, dim villages, and streams, or busy canals and sails, shining in the sun, beyond the brimming blue of its beautiful basin. Rarely did Barabbas seek this hermitage in winter, and in autumn never. The boat was hardly ever missed from its place, where he himself kept it chained under lock, from an antique wall which defended his garden. A few times in the summer, however, he would spend half an evening there with his child, and it was not unlikely that by the moon, in his frequent absences, that lone place had heard other tender voices besides

those of the rock pigeons or pairing birds in spring—at least after the advent of Hope's short sweet season to the lovers.

Magdalene had, however, a friend, who sometimes shared "sweet counsel" with her here; the gentlest creature, and most loving-natured girl on earth, Rachel Mendez. Yet she belonged to the hostile colony of the Caraites, which uses not even the same language with the Rabbinists that inhabit the other parts of the town, the latter speaking Jewish German, the former the Tartar tongue. Yet had this affectionate young woman learned the dialect of the adverse sect on purpose to be a companion to Magdalene, whose father used the German common to all the Polish Jews. In dress, as creed and habits, the little clan, which has resided there for centuries, differs from the other.

The brother of Rachel, named Basil, had lived long in Berlin, among the Reformed Jews, and "out-heroding Herod," conformably to his wild eccentric character of vague enthusiasm, not stopping at Deism, (to which the liberal opinions imbibed from the influence of Moses Mendelshom's writings tended) he came to the quiet little settlement of his forefathers, a confirmed Atheist. There he led a dissolute life,

corrupting the youths by example, and diffusion of the writings of Voltaire and others—cajrolled his sister out of her entire fortune, and grew a great friend of Julian.

The day arrived for the humiliating misery that the love-tamed barbarian, of more than one apostacy, was to *welcome*, and for a Creed he utterly scorned as an imposture—for fraternity with those against whom his blood was boiling! It came, and he hailed it! Cheered in secret by his young Caraité friend (whom he dared not in public accost) he expected the hour, and they joined in a hollow laughter at the coming mummary, and in one perhaps more sincere at all human religions; though Julian excepted that of the one Incómprehensible Great God. Basil Mendez had, like the Corsair, “one virtue and a hundred faults,” but that one, or whatever he had of good and kindly in his nature, so far from redeeming him from those faults, proved itself the most active agent in his ruin. For, conscious of this better something within him, it kept up his self-regard through them all. A minute’s glow of sympathy with suffering,

left him self-complacent to inflict suffering where self was concerned ; he mistook a sense of the great and beautiful in morals for possession of fine qualities :—in short, embodied in his self-conceit, by this self-delusion, the impossible character which Novelists (at least bad ones) love to impose on their readers for possible ones in Nature ; the lady-killing, lip-curling, raven-haired hero of the highway or forest, who has every possible virtue that can win gentle hearts, except two, common honesty and common humanity ; who takes a purse with a pensive sort of presentation of a pistol ; who, if he break a woman's heart by murdering a husband, brother, or father, atones for it by loving her whole *sex* hugely ; who should he (in some back-sliding moment) even take a life for money sake, in a less imposing manner, a little *à la Thurtell* ! has *still* some soft charm left, to ensure many tears from fair readers' eyes, for the grand catastrophe—the last act, performed in his night-cap under a gallows, with its sentimental epilogue, the gibbet. Basil, capable of the worst acts, *believed* himself capable of the noblest, and so deemed himself noble. As example, he had robbed his fond sister to her last means, and left her dependent on Magdalene for bread, yet

did not much despise himself for the act, but rather respect himself the more, for the intense love he bore her in return for her ruining herself to maintain him in his vicious courses.

In the evening of this eventful day, the two female friends were in a house in the old suburbs, by which the procession in Julian's affair was to pass. A great noise in the street attracted Rachel to the window. Julian was coming back! It was over. How will he look, was the curious thought of all. Magdalene had been sitting an hour in one posture, with the paleness and fixedness of marble, in the dusk of the room's back part. But now she caught the sounds.

"God of my fathers! what's that?—oh, my dear Rachel, what is that?"

"It's over! all over—all well!" she cried, throwing herself on her friend's neck. "But you must not go to the window, indeed—perhaps—he's frightful pale, and he's strangely drest—but he'll be soon indoors somewhere."

"No, I won't see him, dear—I can't see him, dear!" she answered, staring as if with stoney eyes at her kind friend holding her, she struggling toward the window all the while.

"But you *do*—you drag—now don't!"

“No, I *can't*—I *can't* bear,” she reiterated, and was at the window, in her body's strength and absence of mind, even while so speaking. And she saw him walk, followed by a vast mob, but not a reviling, if not applauding one. He was barefoot, in a strange garb like one shrouded for death, the soil of the earth where he had extended himself was visible on it; the street was all dark mire, and a rain falling; he was death pale even to the lips, perhaps from the awful last vehement imposed renunciation of his Saviour, so lately on those lips, yet ringing in his ears; the blood used in the more secret parts of the form exhibited on his brow, some of its colour taken from his hand; altogether his look was terrible and affecting. Yet he smiled up at the window where he expected her. But Magdalene was already fainting on her friend's lap when he smiled.

“And this he did for *me*—for *me*! Oh, Rachel!” was all she spoke ere her eyes closed of themselves.

And all this was done in vain! Julian demanded his birthright. Barabbas would not speak to him, but referred him to a limb of the Polish law, not noted for honesty or mercy. Endless involvements of the little estate were to

be all threaded through a maze, wilfully formed, of technicalities which to the untaught youth were cabalistic mysteries, and his personal freedom was at stake, on his accepting his encumbered property—his fondly expected small resource for the future, with Love and Magdalene.

It was not long after this upshot of his fate, that his new trial awaited him—that at the bar of justice on the criminal charge of entering the Jew's house by night, masked, &c. as already stated, according to the ill-translated "News" of some London newspaper, worse copied into a provincial one, thus falling into the hands of our "Lone Man of Wales."

The further reading of these rude Hints for Tragedy, drawn from the living drama of Man, was postponed to a future day.

NIGHT.

Pass of the Cross, near Llan y Mawddy, Merionethshire.

WE are encamped in a very lofty situation, up a very amphitheatre of grand mountains, near the source of the fine river Dovey. Coming from Dinasmouthy, toward this range, with its ruinous appearance of crags toppling over its semilunar concave, we wonder how our road (to Bala) is ever to pass this cloud-capt barrier, for *surmounting* it enters not the imagination. Yet you find it *is* to be surmounted—and no perils now attend the achievement; but formerly the way was so terrific that a cross stood on the top, by which a good Catholic was to kneel, and thank the Virgin Mary, or some saint, or any thing but God, for his saved bones. Hence the name of the pass—‘*Bwlch y Groes*’ (pass or gorge of the Cross).

A solemn, almost savage scene! yet not desolate. There are pleasant little green dry pasture spots, at various heights, on one of which our tents are pitched, nothing heard (it being already the twilight of moonrise) but

faintly-wafted rural sounds from the deep-down vale, and the dash of the river, yet an infant cataract, but growing powerful, in its precipice-channel—a noble one—all headlong rocks, and trees leaning headlong above them. Cots roofed with red fern-stalks like reeds, look novel and antique in our bird's-eye view. We see *our* wild river leaping here grown into a sedate early maturity below, like a pretty romp grown to a graceful young woman; stealing away, through quiet fields to Llan y Mawddy village, whose ancient tower we saw till lately, sober in the distance of that sweet vale of the Dovey, where the dying glow of a glorious day bathed all in its own purple light—the hazelled river, the huts, the farms—the mighty banks, the granite ruins shooting up into the faded sky, above all. Some freak of our mighty Mother has forbidden the nightingale to North Wales. We miss her much. In this interval, before the confirmed moonlight, one could easily fancy those vast mural fronts of rock into the mysterious ruins of the oldest Abbeys, and weather-stained walls, and fretted arches of some grand Cathedral, and in those stoney entrails of the hills lying all about below, in slabs rudely resembling sculpture (as the mounting moon now gives them faint shadows) we see cold sepul-

chral effigies lying on ruinous tombs—mitred and panoplied dead in stone, with hands joined in prayer on the breast.

We want but a cross, against that now golden twinkling blue back-ground, as once it showed one, to complete a solemn early night landscape. ✓

The Doctor, as the moon rose higher, exerted his cat-like faculty of seeing in dusk, (although short-sighted as an owl) and the evening being sultry and still, even at this height, we had a little more reading about our second Julian the Apostate.

CHAPTER IV.

JULIAN IN BLOOD.

“ I gazed upon her with awe and even dread—her cheek was so pale, so bloodless—her lips so white and bleached—her eyes so fixed in the gloomy stedfastness of utter desolation.”——“ I was alone with my dead ; and who the slayer ? God pity ME !—Can you soften stone into flesh again ? ”

MATTHEW WALD.

ON resuming the proceedings in Court on the following day, it was the public impression

that nothing was to be expected but the prisoner Julian's condemnation, none doubting his guilt. To the astonishment of all, and most of all of the accused,—two women strangers to him, stood up as witnesses in succession, each of whom positively swore to his having passed the whole night in a certain house, at a distance from the town; and after them, stood up Basil Mendez, confirming their evidence in every particular. Magdalene was not present to taste this ecstatic revival of hope of life for her lover. It was not long, however, denied to her. Julian was not even called on for defence; he was declared innocent, and many congratulating hands of fair strangers, as well as their glistening eyes, hailed his escape from a death of blood and infamy.

It was only by long patient search that the Man Haunter at last discovered some further reference to this affair in his newspaper fragments.

* * * * *

Troki, October.

“Unparalleled hath been the concourse of strangers from all parts, many come many versts on foot in the night, to witness the trial

arising out of that of the young man, Julian Acosta," &c. &c. Thus proceeded the mutilated old Journal, from a file of which the Lone Man extracted the above, and whose dry detail we shall modernise and expand.

Magdalene Mosheim was placed at that criminal bar, where the youth Acosta had so lately stood, charged with robbing her father of jewels and money to a great amount. There was another indictment in reserve, should the first fail, for a crime cognisable by the Polish law, that which in England is called subornation to Perjury.

The universal murmured question among the crowd was 'Will the Jew pursue his child to death? Will he really appear, and bring his witness, (for he had one,) or is this but to punish her by the disgrace and shock?' The faithful Rachel was at her tottering friend's side as she walked; upheld her as she stood; whispered her comfort and hope, and folded her to her breast, even at the bar, where she stood shaking.

The witness expected was a woman, whom the desperate girl had bribed at first to swear to the *alibi* (for her lover), afterward established by two others also bought with her father's gold. This woman, a Jewess, received

her hire from Magdalene's simple confidence before performing the service, and when the Jew raised the alarm of his having been robbed of his *real* strong box of jewels, she doubled her gains by bargaining for her secret with him. The astounded man found he had bribed her to stab his own heart! "My daughter! *My* daughter? Thou lyest! Magdalene? Unsay it, woman of lies!"

His exclamations exhausted his strength, but not the strength of his revenge. He tore her in a single hour from his heart, his blood, his very nature; he made her and her paramour (as he called him) one, thenceforth; and, together, one festering spot in his being, that he would cut out like a cancer from his flesh! If the pain should be mortal, more intolerable still, because not mortal would be the pain of permitting it to remain. His revenge against the youth she had baffled, when it alone had risen to a constant gnawing unsatisfied anguish; and she had, in addition, robbed him of his jewels,—robbed him of herself! his single jewel, which to keep was not watch, was not trouble, but soothing. What nature so rugged but must feel the loss of a loving, an only daughter? A loving daughter? Alas! she was within

that hour become an unnatural wretch—a robber ; and worse, the accomplice of worse than a robber only,—his young bosom snake, his enemy, hating and hated, stung and stinging !

There was indeed no hope of mercy in such a bosom, old and raging in the very first plunge into childless liveness of despair, and the trial was to be almost instant on this dreadful convulsion in his existence. There was not even a little relenting time for the growth of Mercy, in that ungenial flinty soil, of a breast hardened by grinding traffic, by much wrong borne for his religion sake in his travels, grown callous by nature, habit, and solitary old age.

Such mercy as one of Milton's newly fallen angels might be imagined to shew or feel, while first waking on the lake of fire, could he by one bound have reascended, to the unfallen individual angel who had hurled him headlong—such mercy, such pity, such father-love, was to be looked for, from that furious old and bad man, raging in the lonely world of pain—that she had made all at once round his grey head, and not raging in vain—clutching his victim—ready with a seconder to ensure his blow—to drag her to the scaffold ; for there she stood, there she stands, and the fatal woman, whose

evidence is to thrust the unhappy prisoner beyond the pale of judicial mercy, is on the road—probably this minute within the gloomy court-yard walls.

But let us a moment follow Barabbas. On the evening before the day of trial, he rowed *himself* (a novel action) to the little island, now ankle-deep in yellow leaves, the summer room green with damps, and the lake heaving, leaden-hued, with a force and noisy dash that allied it in idea to a sea. This was the place where the Jew would retire for rumination, more frequently than for recreation with Magdalene. What his review of past life there presented, none knew, but it was believed that his wealth had not been cheaply purchased. Dark tales were told of his chequered life, but as he had travelled in many lands, there were none that rested on more than rumour.

To “meditate in the fields at eventide” is not the exclusive taste of amiable minds, however harshly it breaks on the dream of romance to say so. It is probable that Cain, the outcast, as well as the gentler Isaac, so meditated.

Eventide—the dying hour of day—is dear—is soothing to others beside the innocent. The man of gloomy, even guilty memories, finds in the sinking sounds of life, of the insects in

the air, the very hum of the ground, all tending to silence—all subsiding into a mournful whisper—a promise of peace, a faint idea of holy dying—of the whisperings of the Angel of Mercy. The man of many disappointments finds in that sublime decay of glory, something that exalts him into almost the indifference of a superior being toward human aims, and the rankling wretchedness of their decay, and walks superior to the low desire of earthly glory.

The man of fiery temperament—the secret voluptuary of the heart—he whose burning passion, perhaps never fed or never satiated, or but for such a brief space as only made it rage the fiercer, ever after keeping an undying hot youth within a dying bosom, (or one that calculating reason tells it is almost time to die)—even he forgets his folly—remembers that “Love’s young dream,” whether ever or never fulfilled, is not for him “fallen into the sear leaf,” and makes his “mistress’s eye” of the evening star, his safe-beamed Cynosure of the young Moon, his “Love’s throne” of the evening-purpled mountain head, or safer still, his own child’s eye.

The jealous dignity of a proud mind—the dread of ridicule from what we love (so insufferable!) no longer fights passion within him

while gazing *there*; no longer compels him (forestalling scorn with scorn) to turn an eye of affected indifference—the *old* man's dull regard—as he must on the young beauty of the world, that sets his secret soul on fire, perhaps far more than ever it did in his less sensitive because more merely animal youth. On that young beauty of heaven he may gaze his fill, nor fear if his eye swim in tears. On setting sun or star he can let his eye rest, without a constant guard upon it to disguise its softening—that softness of a more spiritualized kind which that *heaven's* soft eyes inspire, is not ridiculous; while on the *human* eye of the beautiful, *his* must not rest, or he must secure his dignity by hypocrisy.

Perhaps even the Jew, when he reached his desolate stone room, in that two-fold evening of the day and of the year, felt something of its better influences, when he sat down alone (and to be for ever now—*alone*), where he had, however rarely, felt some touch of tenderness—sat, and looked on his daughter's empty chair (of rude boughs) opposite to him, and heard only the splash of the now gloomy autumnal lake, and the fitful rustling sweep of the dry leaves that the gust set whirling round the walls, where their depth almost choked the en-

trance. Did he relent? It was here he used to come to brood over his affairs, apart from the busy pursuits of his town's people. Did he now come with some worthier aim? Alas! his actual ushering of his child into her place of shame and danger of the judgment—of man's at least—boded ill of such a hope. He was not, however, unobserved as he believed.

But where is the accuser?—where the witness? The court waits dumb in a horrified expectation of the father's entrance to denounce his child to death:—but neither appeared! Magdalene was remanded to prison to await her trial on the second indictment of subornation, the first being abandoned through the absence of evidence.

It was remarked that Julian, now of course at liberty, occupied the same place where Magdalene had shrouded herself, when innocent and at liberty, during his trial.

That same evening the body of a murdered woman was dragged out of the lake of Bressal, near the shore. The nearly severed head, as they pulled it up the bank, lolling frightfully back on the shoulders of the corpse, appended but by tendons, gave dreadful proof of her mode of death; and the carcase was identified as the body of the witness expected. The fa-

ther also was missing, but his absence was believed to be in sullen relenting to save his guilty child.

If any one had suspected that soft-hearted girl as an accomplice in his murder, in any way—as a parricide—her terrible wildness of entreaty to be permitted, under a guard, to go about and seek her “dear, dear father,” would alone have removed the vile suspicion.

A subsequent day found her indeed so engaged; in full freedom, yet not acquitted—set free through the death of that witness and long disappearance of the father-accuser.

The boat being seen chained, and locked as usual, under the garden-wall washed by the lake, (whence, at that season, it was never stirred) no one for many days thought of going to the lone island, or dreamed of finding the Jew there, as the fact of its being in its place, he keeping its padlock key, assured every one that he must have returned thence. At last, some one rowed over by chance rather than in search. On opening the door, an astonishing number of black flies, mostly dead, but some still feebly crawling over the dead heaps, crowded the window. The last flies of the summer had there found some loathsome nidus for propagation of their species, and the numerous hatched off-

spring, had just reached their winged life to perish soon in the inclosed place. The single death which had thus abundantly spawned *life*, though of loathsome kind, was evident. A festering carcase lay by the overturned rustic chair it had filled. No blood, or black remains of blood, appeared. The visitor recoiled in terror, but the whole isle (a mere green rock) and its air were infected with the loathsome horror.

But on closer inspection, the Jew's body being left precisely as discovered, strong signs of his having not died a natural death, appeared. The muscles of his arms had stiffened in the contraction of a violent effort, and were both upraised still, as if in act of tearing away a pillow or the strangling cord, in suffocation's agony, and the frightful grinning of the retracted lips, harmonised horribly with the idea of such agony.

Some pretended to detect, through putrefaction, marks of nails, as well as a ligature on the neck. The eyes were not protruded, (conformably to the *imaginary* dire picture of such death, afforded by Shakespeare), for the construction of the eye and muscles prevents; but their being wide open, (though their curious jellies now exhibited but shrivelled collapse, horribly as they stared), might well

cheat the gazers into the belief of their starting from their sockets.

No wound was there, yet there was some vestige of bloody fingers on the door! On seaching further, something of terrible damning character was picked up, all over blood—a bracelet formed of hair. It had probably been burst in the violent swell of straining muscles of a murderer's arm, engaged in conquering the inconceivable force of every living creature in a death-struggle. *Whoever could recognise this little token of love or friendship, would know its wearer;* and that wearer, if not *certainly* the murderer of the old man, was surely the woman's, for on the oar-handles, now minutely examined, blood was seen, blood on the seat, and the same hand which had plunged her into the lake, after almost severing her head from her body, had doubtless handled those oars, that door, and left that impress of bloody fingers thereon.

The pretty fancy of binding their lover's arms with their locks, had become a fashion among the young folks of Troki, where an attachment had sprung between one of a Car-aite and one of a Rabbinical family, realising the dilemma of the Montague and Capulet lovers of the Italian Novelist and our Drama-

tist. Now Rachel had invested her beloved brother's arm, with a remembrancer of this nature; Magdalene had done the same with her lover. Yet, however fearful a suspicion arose, this momentous trifle, from such gifts being common, afforded not proof of guilt against either Julian or Basil. The latter was of a character not unlikely to rush on such act, in a sort of mad pride of zeal in his friend's cause, as one of wild justice. Or it might have been their joint crime—or some one *might* have waylaid the woman on the lake's side, to rob her of the large sum which she was believed to have received from both daughter and father.

Julian, meanwhile, exhibited no signs of guilt. He had been in court during the long expectation of the witness and accuser, watching Magdalene, from the very nook whence her eyes had been fixed on him while in her (then present) situation, of shame and universal mark.

The darkest suspicions gathered round both him and the unhappy girl, extreme as was her filial grief. It was resolved, for securing the ends of justice, that the bracelet should be kept strictly from inspection till a certain moment, that of Julian's being put on his trial for the murders, when Magdalene Mosheim

should be suddenly summoned as a witness against him; the bloody bracelet held to her eyes,—put into her hand,—and she required before God, and as she should answer it at the dreadful day of judgment, answer to the voice of her father's blood, crying out of the earth against his murderer—to swear 'yes or no' was she cognisant of that toy, and therefore of its wearer? Julian, meanwhile, was again a prisoner, and, on account of his former character, treated with all the severity shown to the proven guilty.

The moon became clouded at this stage of our reading, and suspended it till another day. A change came over the wild grand landscape of the rocks, precipices, trees, leaping waters, and towering peaks all round, and the far-down dim valley, buried now in sleep, both of man and quadruped, as appeared by the silence.

There was sublimity in the mere repose, while nothing but falling waters broke the profound silence. With such a vastness of objects, it seemed that there should have been uproar and jar, to preserve a *keeping* in the moral pros-

pect, and Almightiness seemed half revealed in such a quiet, imposed on such a chaos—the ruinous confusion of torn mountains. At last the distant clock of the very antique church and village of Llan y Mawddy, just reached us, and we counted twelve to our surprise. The sweet night had kept us out of—Tent.

Methought the withered man of conflicting feelings, leaning over the fractured masses of rock, down which the new-born Dovey tumbled, fulfilled my previous fancy of a sepulchral effigy among those dusky, moon-tinted, or shadowy blocks of granite below, by a reality—a man his own tomb—a flesh-and-blood *effigies* (not *vera*, alas!) of the man of hope and young ambition, in ruins.

Perhaps there is something in the mingling of moonlight and landscape, where the latter is profusely green, a very forest of leaves, in that “green and yellow melancholy,” which such conjunction may be said to spread “sickly over” the whole face of Nature, hardly safe to be looked at by those already infected with Melancholy, the jaundice of the Soul. If we ever have loved, it was by that moon that we loved most intensely, most meltingly. If we have hoped sanguinely, it was by that moon we hoped, if not most sanguinely, certainly

most deliciously—the calm-whispered promise of Hope, without a rapture—“the sober *certainty*,” (alas, for youth’s dream!) of waking bliss” *to be*—soothes the soul without agitating it. What youthful aspirant in Love or Fame was not “every inch a poet”—thrice a lover—on the moonlight stile? listening to brooks, and nightingales, or gazing up to mountains?

The sun of even Summer’s Day, with his “garish eye,” must yield in serene glory to that soft-eyed sister of his—that white *ghost*-sun of Midnight. *Her* smile, *her* life-like eye, seems for ever on each of us, like a dead mother’s picture (with look seeming ever turned down on her children, as her spirit’s from the sky), while his monarch-eye darts fiercely glorious on his universal household, uniped, biped, or milleped, alike—setting them task-work rather than shedding a love-blessing. Therefore, when Love and Ambition are over, and Age sets his seal on hearts, and its impress, more deforming than Cain’s, on brows, while Old Age is growling “Love no more!” and his pale lord behind (less hideous) is heard in the distance with shroud flapping, and voice crying in the wilderness (the dim-starred impenetrable black wood of the *grave’s* future) “Live no more!” I say, then perhaps it were better for

such man to take eternal leave of his *soul's* blue-throned mistress, and antedate that everlasting eclipse of her beauty, which already is growing fast over her face—to him. (Thus freely do I adopt my fellow-travellers' flights of soliloquy that I often hear, and send off for my own !)

It seems, he has thoughts of changing “Our Country,” that he so often rages about, for a very distant one.

“How can you bear to leave such a favourite land, Doctor?” I inquired.

“Oh, wherever there are Mountains,” said he, “and wild haunts, and—*no d—d* Radicals—*no——*” I leaped toward my tent; but, he following, I cried in pure desperation, “Doctor, Doctor! do just try if you can't recollect those two Sonnets, or something in that shape, you once read from your Unknown Bards—or—or anything that's *as short*. Then I'll *go to bed, directly*.” He complied, and thank God! forgot Politics.

FOR MY SONS.

THE sear bough, mangled by the woodman's axe,
That props the weak stems of the budding hedge,
Folded in their green leaves, though sap it lacks,
Looks as it ne'er had borne the killing edge;

Looks green as they ; but May the difference shows ;
 The hedge-stake leafless, while the hedge-row blows :
 So young in you—green in your green, my sons !
 Propping your feebleness, and blest to prop,
 I mixed my “ sear leaf,” with your budding ones ;
Now comes your rampant May—and I may drop !
 Not that ye ’ll flout me with insulting top,
 My dutiful ! but that my race seems run,
 And *my* lone life should with our *joint* life stop.
 That task fulfilled, I sitting in the sun
 Lonely, more listless grown feel fit for none ;
 My part, my bliss, my balm, my life is done !

FOR MY SON.

WORLD ! thy stern claim to my child’s servitude,
 Like poor Virginius, I dare not withstand.
 And must I tear him with my own old hand,
 From this lone breast’s tremendous solitude ?
 Must he no more sit by me on the grass ?
 No more beside me watch the sunsets grand ?
 Meet me each morn ? No more, no more, alas !
 Farewell the flowery Wales—the loveliest land !
 I feel the wildness of the wild North’s chief,*
 Who spurned his crutch, and bound his brow in brass,
 In his fierce impotence of father-grief ;
 (*I* that familiar voice, and look, and laugh,
 Warned to forego—my wounded spirit’s staff,
I with no casque, (but this hot hand that holds)
 To bind my brow, cry “Hence each pastoral charm !

* Speech of Northumberland on the news of his son’s death in Shakespeare.

Away with wanderings round the wild sheep-folds ! ”
I wave as worn, as weak, as wild an arm ;
I too, like him, called with my last of strength,
To fight life’s fight (more fit my body’s length
To stretch on earth;) while hollowly, a dread
Voice from my heart re-echoes all he said,
(A heart though weak confirmed to break, not bend)
“ Let order die ! ” * * * “ that this rude scene may end,
And darkness be the burier of the dead ! ”

END OF EIGHTH DAY.

THE
MOUNTAIN-DECAMERON.

NINTH DAY.

ARGUMENT.

A Bard's-eye view of a vessel in a gale. The Wrecker's Tower. Julian Acosta.

MORNING.

From the sea-side rocky piazza called "The Cave," near Dunraven Castle, Glamorganshire.

WE breakfasted here in a saloon that rivals most royal ones, I presume. The Cave, so called by the country people, as the cavern of caverns, is indeed too magnificent not to enjoy some distinctive title. A giant's physical, and

a king's ceremonial greatness, might both be satisfied by its dimensions. A stupendous passage perforates this range of cliff, that buttresses the land above, while eastward is another cavern called the Windhole. The strange sounds formed by the rush of winds through the many fissures that run up all through the superincumbent hills, have a novelty in their wildness, and force of sound, quite appalling, especially in south-easterly blasts. A great variety of sea-birds, with their discords, build in this mighty wall of Nature's hand. Numbers, disturbed by us, rushed out, with all their screams and beatings of the air ; with white, grey, black, strong, and feeble wings ; some soaring quite out to sea, some into the clouds, others hovering, as if in anger at this invasion of their domain by so contemptible a "creeping thing" as man, not gifted like them, to cope with ocean and play above all its fury ; —a creature so liable to be caught there, by a spring-tide, when he might wish himself a bat or beetle, while he should hurry back in vain to the mighty entrance ; a little pale beast caught in an enormous trap set by giants Despair and Death !

A promontory rock near, is crowned with the dreary old erection Dunraven Castle (now

modernised). In Grose's Antiquities is an allusion to this fortress, as the scene long ago of a strange tragedy occurring to the family of its owner, Lord of the Manor of Dunraven, who had stooped to the detestable crime of a wrecker, and of the worst kind, by exhibiting false lights along the coast. Our Doctor has got a tale, it seems, founded on this fact, (for such it appears to have been), entitled "The Wrecker Lord of Dunraven." but I believe it will not reach you these "Ten Days." The dreadful crime of wrecking is (*was*, I trust, must be said) practised all along the dangerous coasts of this part of Britain. I thus correct my say with a past tense, on the respectable authority of a gentleman, laudably alive to the honour of his native land, as well in this particular as in literature, who assures me, that, though the dead may have been seen of *late years*, in cases of shipwreck, stretched on the beach, no murder has taken place, those victims being the wreckers themselves, dead-*drunk* from the spirits cast ashore.*

* P. Buckley Williames, Esq. of Pennant, Montgomeryshire, who has devoted much time and money in the attempt to establish a *literary* spirit in Wales *versus* Spirit—*Libros versus Libras*—Letters against Ledger—the Lyre against the kennel—but I *fear* the kennel "had it."

Here, among huge blocks of rockstone, with the same piled, like the mountain's ribs torn bare, in strata, to a great height above (with that lofty den of murder of old time, frowning grim still on its beetling headland) the mysterious mouths of those excavations in the solid mountain walls, or on a beach lonely enough for the seal to come and sun himself in its solitude—the cormorants and peregrine falcons still fluttering above—we pigmies perceived ourselves growing mean, even to each other, while the feeble treble of our drowned voices—often as a whole sea broke down before us, in a great wave—was hardly audible.

The day grew wild, capricious, squally, but we had a magnificent shelter in many a wave-worn piazza. The sea exhibited a leaden hue, and the sound of the approach of the far-out ranks of waves, was still vaster than the last, and each hid more of the sea behind it. All at once the sun broke out, and the whole floor of the sea trembled with the colours of mother-of-pearl, or the interior of the most beautiful of one of its own shells, while the shadows of clouds in rout kept flying over its beauty. The sail of a passing vessel took a beauty not its own, in that gleam, looking of purest white, while thus sunshiny, in all its breadth of can-

vass. But to watch the rapidity (for it was not far off) with which the bowing, reeling, stupendous edifice, rode by on the thin element, so agitated and urged by another, that can prostrate even ponderous erections of stone on the stedfast earth !—rode with all its souls, fearless, and engaged in common employ, as in a shop or kitchen, as if indeed they had been but *souls*, creatures whose life no longer resided in perishable flesh, in delicate organs, five minutes' suspension of whose play is Eternity, with its heaven and its hell (or its shadow at least, almost as terrible) for all mankind !

We looked and thought of Man's wonderful nature, while they careered thus past, *housed* between two of the most resistless elements in nature, pillowed on the rocking breast of one, and making even their locomotive engine of the convulsion of each ! To us, thus thinking, each low stooping of their stupendous tower of canvass full of wind, seemed its fatal last ; the frothed foam of the wave that flew over it, seemed the triumph of the monster Deep, which had got it down ; and the sullen roar, not unlike that of many forest ones, favoured the illusion, till we half believed that leaning tower never more would recover itself, in the very teeth of the unremitted steady *charge* of

the irresistible wind, which blew with all the force, without the gusts of a storm, and hence gave no recovering time to the oppressed pride of the waters, by pause or remission. But another wave flung the huge sea-house of so many men, to yet another wave, which received it like a shuttlecock in its wavering buoyant dance; and up again towered the white wall, facing the east, and was as full of the sunlight as the breath of heaven, and bounded away—we anxious on the firm beach—its inmates fearing nothing at all, that were the playthings of air and water!

But when the blue serene increased, and there was an azure green path of calm for her, as she seemed to tack, how beautiful she looked! Before, a white palace of that roaring wilderness, to our fancy now she became more; a vast-winged angel of the sun, (as the east was all thrown open, as if to send her forth,) while thus skimming the waters in the glorified break of blue; we raised her at last to an Archangel, despatched, on some errand involving life or death to millions, speeding his aerial way over that tumultuous yet trackless outside of our planet, to shun filthy contact with the land's mortality.

It was here we pursued Julian Acosta's tale.

CHAPTER V.

JULIAN IN LOVE-AGONY.—PERJURY OR
PARTING !

BASIL, whose nature involved a sort of melancholy perversion of nobleness, leaped for joy at the old Jew's fate, on his young friend's account. If this mode of venting feeling rather removed suspicion from himself, his manner, in his sister's presence, rather tended to invite it. He had a depraved spirit of romance in him, not uncommon, which made him love to exaggerate his own feelings.

It was a piece of noble villany, he deemed, to thus save a lovely girl, and he aspired to the glory of it, at least within the bound of self-preservation, and hardly that. No doubt he was *capable* of such an act, and perhaps of daring it for even the good of another, to his own perdition, if that other had a hold on his romantic regard.

Hence, to the weeping Rachel, he almost confessed himself the author of these horrors. Yet there was a volatile superficialness in his loose character, and a kind-heartedness and absence of deep thought in it, which seemed uncongenial to acts of tremendous import, here and hereafter. He bared his arm, and shewed it without the hair bracelet she had given him, (for it was known that such an one had been found,) yet his levity belied the belief he sought to impose on her, and he was always a droller and liar.

Julian was again in prison ! But what was even his state of feeling to that of Magdalene—Magdalene now rich and self-dependent ? Unheard-of predicament ! Insufferable dilaceration of a tender heart ! Strange distraction of appalling emotions ! “ All for *me* ! ” she again reiterated in her dreadful nights ; “ all for *me*, if he *be* guilty ! ” That for her he forfeited fortune, forswore his creed, forsook a Redeemer, stooped to become a midnight robber—that he even prostrated himself on the earth to be trod upon—prostrated his proud spirit below a worm’s—lay thus to be trampled, and turned not like the worm—even all this was nothing in comparison to these last deeds, if *his*—for *now* he had taken two murders on his soul for *her* !

And what did this merit from her? That she should witness against him?—should confound him, in open hall of justice?—swear to the fatal ownership of the bracelet, and send him, young as he was, to that very scaffold from which he had saved *her*?—and for the very acts by which he so saved! “Wretch! wretch!” thundered, as it were, a voice within her that moment, “are *you* a daughter? and dare to demur in this manner?—to *ask* what thy father’s murderer merits from *thee*? Remember him lying, festering, unburied, a feast for worms, above ground!

“Then God pity me, or strike me dead for a vile wretch, or the wretchedest of Thy sore-tried creatures!” Thus in dead night exclaimed the over-tried, sleepless, and spent girl, and leaped from bed, and flung herself at her length on the floor. “Do thy most dreadful pleasure, God!—but I swear to keep my lost self to myself, in this hideous question, between my dear father’s soul in heaven, and this young man, my—oh! that I should *still* have on my lips—*dear* Julian! I will not bear false witness, and I cannot, oh! cannot, bear *true*, *if*—if—oh! God of Truth!—it cannot be! *Julian*?—he kill my father? It is *not* the locket!—it is *not* my hair!—but I’ll not, I swear I will not,

look upon it! Enough; I know it *can't* be. Lying on this ground, before Thy face, oh Father that art in Heaven! as did my poor—did that poor prisoner, now in his chains, lie grovelling before men's for *my* sake, I say, annihilate me if I did not love my father dearly, oh dearly, so as he never loved *me*, his child, but I *him* not the less for that, *dearly!* Oh! avenge him *Thou*, but make not me the instrument!"

Vain prayer! men, if not God—*would*, must make her the instrument!

It was in the dusk of the close of a day dim as a night, that Rachel, by leave of the gaoler, led into the cell of Julian, a Catholic ecclesiastic, who came to confess the prisoner, he having declared a wish to that effect, repentant of his abjuration of Christ. To such wish all indulgence was shown. Rachel retiring, the gaoler, also, respecting the privacy of a party at confession, the muffled form was left with the penitent alone. Instantly throwing off the cowl and robe, stood before the expectant prisoner, dumb and shaking, Magdalene! By her wish, and by her stratagem, and which Rachel had conveyed to him, it was that they thus met. Julian caught her hand, but ere he could

bring it to his lips, anticipated, by letting go, even her rapid movement to withdraw it—her shudder being perceptible, even down to her wasted fingers' ends. Not a word was uttered. But wordless thoughts passed through each mind in frightful throng and swiftness, and pain, and horror.

Magdalene—(alas, for human self-delusion, under passion!)—came to ask a charged murderer, “Was he guilty?”—to ask and stake all, even duty—life—soul, on his veracity! “Oh, he would not deceive *her*!” Yet followed an agony of thought—“But he *believes* in nothing. Ah, God of Judah, he *believes* not! What is *his* oath? Oh, those books! Oh, that reading of ours! Oh, what is man to man without God in the world—without the fear of God? without *some* hold of man on man? what are oaths to *him*?” Thus her voiceless Thought raved all within; while Julian was aware of that snatching away of her hand—(that familiar hand!) from him the suspected murderer. He *felt* her aversion—turned a little from her, held his forehead, and never spoke a word. Happy for men is it, that woman's tears, more ready as they are, have *not* that magical pathos for our sex, that those of men have for women. She

discovered that he was weeping,—he could not *act* tears!—*he*, the pretended murderer, was crying like her, a weak girl! Could *he* do a murder? A mountain seemed heaved at once, from off her poor bosom. At last he said, in hurried accents—

“I understand that shiver, Magdalene—that snatch *from* me of the hand I used to devour with kisses—no matter! let me die!—I’d *rather* be a dead man, murdered by a false judgment, to be pitied by you—than bear *this* moment! cursed moment!—*this*—while *you* shudder at me—at *me*, your Julian—as a monster!”

“No—no—no!” she exclaimed; “would I be *here*, if I thought so? *could* I plot meetings with my father’s—Oh, God of Abraham!”

“Why then your words, *now* coming from an *averted* mouth? Why do you stand all the distance this horrid hole lets you, shrinking up to its slime, away from *me*, more loathsome? Even *were* I—still, it was for you—oh Magdalene! it was all for *you*!”

“But it *was* not!” she shrieked, starting with horror; “it *would* have been, you mean?” and she was almost close at his bosom, as his mournful voice faltered the words she madly

thus replied to. "Oh this *doubt*, Julian, this *doubt*! I forgive you, from my soul, be the truth what it will, but in mercy, *tell* me that truth—take me off this rack!" She threw herself on her knees, and embracing his, said—"Pardon, pardon, if I wrong you by those doubts; pardon the questions I *must* ask, or my heart will burst—indeed it will! But, oh! *swear* to answer truly!"

"I swear, sweet soul!"

But she rose disconsolately. She retreated, and wrung her hands—for again that despairing thought came—"What is an oath to him?"

"Do you believe in Jesus of Nazareth?" she again said vehemently—"if *not* in *him*, in a world to come? in a dreadful day of Judgment? in a revenging God? Oh, Julian! in one moment you are *my* Julian—my innocent! and I've wished to die in such moment, rather than live into the next, when I see your hands at that poor old throat—oh God! oh God! but you'll end this, *won't* you?" And she wandered in her mind, and her voice fell into a childish tone of imbecility.

Again she recovered, rallied her almost scattered senses, and expected his reply.

“Should I *swear* that I believe,” he rejoined, in deep despondency, yet haughty tone—“’twould avail nothing—I shall now ever ever be to *you* a——Not oaths, nor imprecations, nor tears—no not tears of blood, could make me ever more what I was once, to my adorable beauty, my pride, my treasure, *her’s*—*her* Julian! Then, oh you slow suns, hours, and forms, and executioner! why so long? But I can be my own!” And with a stamp of his shackled limb, whose fetters rang with the action, the desperate creature beat his head against the wall with dreadful force.

“Oh, for God’s sake, for *my* sake, have mercy on yourself!” cried she, surprised into tenderness, and touched him tenderly, for the *first* time, placing her hand on his bruised temple, and even brought that head to her beautiful bosom, panting high with terror for—a father’s murderer!

Soon, soon did that father’s image separate that bosom and that brow; while, shocked at her own action, she cried, “But I *will* believe you! Julian!” (and her speech grew solemn). “To *you* I have laid open *my* weak bosom—every thought, every wish, this long time past; more than a prudent girl ought, I’ve trusted to *you*, of my most secret soul—not

more than a *modest* one ought, I yet hope, have I, Julian?"

"Not more than might the white angels, your sisters in heaven, my precious! my lost!" he interrupted her, he—a man, now sobbing with very woman's softness.

"I pitied you, Julian, and I told you so; ah! *now* pity me! I loved you, and at last I told you so. Ah! *now*, if you *do* love me, *now* pity me!—open *your* inmost soul to me, in mercy! Do as *I* have done to *you*! *will* you? *May* I believe you? Oh be noble and be true! *You did not do it?*"

"Leave me to die!" his hollow voice came out of the dark end of the apartment.

"Ah, my God! my God! *that* tells! oh, that *tone*! Don't say *more*, for Heaven's sake!—there may be a listener! I'll ask no more! Where's that gaoler? Oh! Julian! Father!"

"What then?" his voice rose almost into one of thunder, and he concluded (or feigned a fresh conclusion to his sentence)—"leave me to die—*wrongfully*! die a martyr to a false judgment, die innocent,—I was going on!"

"Thank God!" said the credulous girl.

"If it *be* of any avail—if you *can* love me again—come hither, sweet Magdalene; come to where that lamp shines through the grate;

look in my face! what do you see?" And a fine, now faded, noble face of mournful complaining innocence, indeed, did he present to her, as he sunk on his knees. She followed his example, opposite to him; he dared to take her hand, she dared to permit it!

"Innocent, in the name of Heaven! innocent!" She pressed the two hands she had been holding, but faintly, in both hers.

"Ah, forgive me if once more I ask—yet I *do* believe you—But *there has been a bracelet found*;—can you—*will* you—*shew me ours*—have you—it—on, now?"

The wretched daughter's words seemed of themselves to resist being uttered, and her frame shook, and teeth chattered.

Julian rose up sternly, smiling scorn at her. "I *knew* how much you believed me—*possibly* not! What if I have lost it? Go, and examine what they've found. *Appear against me!*"

"Oh *that* will be too late! *then* I *must* either—"

"What!" he thundered, "if you *do* find all blood what you bound on this very arm, would you *screen* me? would you *wish* to do it? would you disown it? You *do* love me, Magdalene!" his suddenly changed voice qua-

vered to himself, and he wept bitterly. "Well then;" he again broke out, "I again swear, Yawn, Hell! Forsake me, God! Abandon me now, *now*, and for ever,—if I *have it not on* this arm now—*now here*, this very moment—but *shew it I will not!* because I *will* be trusted in by you, or be for ever to you—nothing! If not *this* will satisfy, what must be your idea of me? I refuse even your love, woman, while you think me capable of such horrid perjury!"

"I do, I do, I *will* believe you! But, I would my eyes had been lightning-struck, nay, *yours* too, before we read in those books. You *are* innocent—you *are*—so no more words; and I too am—not an unnatural daughter! I am not a wretch in what I am doing—came to do. Oh, quick! It *must* be done. Rachel will be back directly—you must put on this cowl—this great cloak—we must exchange part of our dresses—she must lead out *you*, oh, softly—hark! No words!"

"Never!" he said—"never, generous angel! What! Am I acquitted? Oh, Magdalene, think what I am charged with—you release *me*? Why, my poor, pale, suffering girl would be hooted, hunted, pelted, muddy and bloody, out of our city!—never!"

“ Ah, do not say so! Why, then I can fly to Julian, *innocent*! Alas! I am undone, do what I will. No matter—I’ve long lost all regard for *fair* fame. I’ve learnt to regard neither my home, nor my religion much, nor my country at all, nothing but yours! nothing but yours!”

It was in vain she pleaded, remonstrated, wept. Yet his refusal was a cordial to her heart, while it made it bleed for him. She saw him under the hand of the horrid executioner, but she saw, or fancied, certain innocence in such a noble generosity! Yet, withal, could she not feel his hand’s touch without horror. She but *believed* that she believed, like many an enthusiast, not (like the Christian) blest in the one True Faith of the world’s thousand.

They parted. What a parting! (Rachel waited, sobbing, outside.) She had turned to go, yet stopped, and looked at him.

“ Farewell, then”—he faltered, yet with a sternness, for she was going with no further touch of hand, or—“ Why is that fixed *look*, young lady?”

“ May it not be a last?” she hysterically sobbed.

“ Yes! it will be a last! and *though* the last,

not one"—kiss—he meant, but pride or grief stopped him, and he coiled himself up within himself, crossing his arms, and hobbling in his double fetters from her.

“It was for *you*, remember! it was for you!” at last he cried out like a madman. “Remember *these* bracelets I wear for *you*!” he reiterated, clanking the loose chain betwixt his two hands.

“You *mean* all your *suffering* was for me?”

“Aye, aye—what *should* I mean?”

“And so it was, first and last, dear darling of my heart!” the overpowered tender girl exclaimed! “Poor wronged innocent! So they *did*, my *bird*! (that was her little endearing term of their unchecked love-intercourse formerly.) And you *shall* have *one*,” and she inclined her lovely lips toward him—“we *may* once more.”

A terrible moment! Was Julian guilty? Their chill lips met. The murderer’s lips and daughter’s lips are in long, long contact! Let us hope he *was* that wronged man! Gratitude now again threw him off his guard.

“Ah, *if* I *were* guilty, would I not fall *so*,” said he kneeling, as well as he could for his irons, and clasping her knees; “though it was all for you, *wouldn’t* I? *Wouldn’t* I cry,

‘Forgive me, *orphan!* forgive the wretch that became so cruel, but not to *you!* bloody, but for your sake! for *your* dear life! Pity him, pardon him, *don’t* loathe *him*, who dotes on *your* very footsteps! don’t *see* his bloody hand! See his heart, and *your* name written there! *your* smile, your blush painted there! Don’t *feel* him a monster, a father’s murderer, while he pants to be more than man in your sight—to be an angel-man, beautiful as you, white as your own innocence! Pardon and pity! Pardon and pity!”

Thus the wild youth ran on, his streaming eyes upturned to her’s, now rolling in dark horror, he crying up from her feet, to which, from kneeling, his face had by degrees sunken.

“My God, my God! *is this in earnest?*” she asked, with a voice of hollow horror.

“*Earnest?*” he said, leaping up in spite of his chains,—“No! I say—Did I not say? ‘*If*’ I *had* been guilty. Ah! act your part, gentle Saint, and say, ‘*I do* forgive.’ For much misery have I caused thee, much more shall cause thee—I fear so—before I die; before I die—unjustly!”

“Oh, no—not ‘*I do!*’—that sounds—oh, how it sounds! But surely I *could* forgive, *were* it so; perhaps, I *ought*. But oh, Julian! could we ever meet again?”

By violent effort she with the word tore herself away from him charged with murder, who *would* not be released, perhaps saved. Had she not that affecting proof of his innocence, which her pleading passion persuaded her?

EVENING.

The Coast and its Caverns.

THE storm which had been threatening a long time, announced its presence, ere we had proceeded far, by a terrible and sudden clap of thunder, which the nature of the excavated rock-shore, with all its echoes, made to resemble the roar of a park of artillery.

We all rushed from our hiding place of the cleft in the cliffs, which was a sort of cavern, except that the rocks did not quite meet atop, and found the day grown dim almost to the degree of that great and awful shade which comes over the world without visible atmospheric cause, in an eclipse of the sun. The leap of the foamy head of every wave, as each rode in, in double quick time, to break down in thunder against all the now dismal headlands

and natural breakwaters along all that coast, was beautiful and dreadful—it was like some white monster making vain efforts to scale the mountain walls at one leap, and almost succeeding; for the height to which the spray soared was astonishing, and its fall, in its failure, was a noble cataract.

A fearful murkiness almost shut up the sea, as if Fate was closing the gate of that vast vaulted dungeon of many tragedies—of eternal partings, and deaths without death-beds—to act one more, on whatever human victims might be thereon.

The hastening to land of some little fishing boats, of even the sea-birds, (for many came, as if forsaking their own element in its anger)—the wild crying of these, and the anxious rueful looks turned to the sky by those rough and hardy men, and the more than dismal hollowness of the usual sound of the sea's voice behind the heights, now like another sea there; raging to fight the other; the ghastliness of every object, tinted by the electric clouds fringed with umbered yellow; the insulated rocks off the coast; the coast itself, and drenched beach: and even our own faces to each other: all we saw and heard, announced no common fight of elements at hand;—a spectacle, indeed, which it

is worth something to behold, "*standing*," as Lucretius says well—"safe on a shore." Behold! there, too, was the tossed ship in view, for us to taste the dreadful pleasure he notices; the very one that rode by so gallantly, in that treacherous laughing out of the sun!—*heu, mutata ab illâ!* She had already driven far into the haze of the sea, which indeed allowed but little space between our eye and its travelling gloom, and she was putting back—very little now of her bold canvass wings left visible, as if flagging for fear; and all around her, instead of her morning sea-green path of pearl and gold, tossed a restless "*dirty*" desert, for I think that epithet which sailors apply to the sky, more truly depicts the look of the waves in foul weather. Now, however, it was the yellow of hovering lightning in the clouds, I believe, that gave this dreary tinge to the far-out waters.

"And where the plague are we to run to, out of this sea *overhead*, that's surely coming down?" said our Parson. The two boys rubbed their hands in glee for the novelty sake, feeling the pleasant assurance which the footing on *terra firma* gave against mortal danger at least—(happy Boyhood)—and I could not but reflect—"We are growing alarmed about the fall of some little water-drops on us, with those caverns, these

balconies of cliff, to protect us—and in that vessel are *men* like us; and it is this outrageous mass of half a planet's water, in the midst of whose utmost power lashed into utmost rage, they must *stay!*—*they* are preparing to abide the event, with little but passive submission to trust to!"

These thoughts reconciled us to our situation somewhat, and we also awaited the issue, having just time to reach the "cave," and there listen to the many thunders of waves, winds, reverberating rocks, and deep base of the ordinary sea-roar, in which the very thunder of heaven itself, from its slower, solemner grandeur of rolling round the dusky vault, in a day eclipsed to a twilight, was almost drowned, or dwindled to a mournful accompaniment.

Another and another little bark just reached the shore in time, the fishermen mooring them in a sort of cove at some distance, and one after another, separate solitary men of seafaring look, appeared, we knew not whence,—probably come down some kind of path in the fronts of cliff unknown to us,—and stood, half-blown down, on the water's edge, or rather the utmost verge of the surf, (for the very foam was no weak assailant now), and examined the solitary ship, now exhibiting no canvass—her wings

folded—perhaps for ever—in patient waiting for her fate.

While we almost feared the falling of our covert of the overjutting mountain, we could not but think of their weak trust, that fragile work of man's hands, its few nails, planks, and oakum and cordage ! and (I fear) hug *ourselves* (no doubt fearing for them, prodigiously) in the contrast.

Presently I caught the words of one of those old companions of watery danger and death, as I ventured from shelter to draw near to him—“She might ride it out, but she'll be on that-there reef before you can say Jack Robinson ! It's all over with her !”

I was astonished, not being aware that the peril had risen to its height ; it being indeed the nature of the coast that was the chief peril, full of dangerous and powerful currents, shoals, and rocks.

It was terrific standing even on the land, for not only the flying spray broke over us, but the very stones of the beach were driven far up it, before the hissing surf of every wave, which broke, as if some furious bull or rather those old giant ones, of *Welsh* Mythology—the *Uchain Bannog*, were spurning and tearing them up like sands,—or as the winds do dust,

to drive us back. Yet such was the fearful excitement of the man's words, that having signalled to my friends and brought them out of their colonnade, we remained there, *dodging* the reflux and advancing wave's vast whirl of whitening surf, to watch the vessel.

This old chuff had all the sea in his face. It was as palpable in its work there of a lifetime, as Time's work is on a tombstone, where are all sorts of furrows and gravings but what formed letters and told its tale. Expression, except of those buffetings of the elements, was quite worn out; only his speech,—rather churlish, and muttered to himself rather than to us land-lubbers, (hardly kindred enough in nature to him, to merit such graciousness,) let us into the secret of the chances of the ship's escape.

We were astonished how soon the ship, (nearly reduced in look to her own skeleton, of mere rigging and masts,) seemed quite near, growing, as it were, on the eye; meanwhile, the coast too, so near the vessel, seemed to our simplicity, like an end of the danger at hand. Day rather adds to, than lessens the horror of a shipwreck, at least to *spectators*. The broad light, the presence of many persons, *seeming* available to aid,—the nearness of the safe firm

shore they crowd—all give a mock security to our fancy, till we find it hard to remember that those beings who can even (frequently) hear our call, touch with their eyes and hearts, as it were, the dear and precious stedfast earth,—those healthful strong men, will as soon reach or touch in reality another planet's earth above them—are indeed dying men, past help, past hope, the world at an end with them, and all their true concern with Eternity and that Judgment seat, where they must stand, even ere those who now talk to them, shall sit down again by their own hearth !

It seemed that our neighbour, the old watcher of the sea, saw or knew what had escaped us, some reef in the ship's way, by his exclamation "She has cleared it, by G—!" and then we could see a more raging white part of the sea behind her, running, like a pier hidden by the surf it causes, across the ship's wake. "But she'll be on *this* in no time ! D——n the raw rascals ! the land lubbers ! what are they at ? *There* she strikes—she's struck ! she's lost !"

The boys fancied they could hear cries, and we distinctly saw the downfall of her mainmast, like the last bowing of some majestic tree to the force of many men and ropes, when the axe has been laid to the root.

“ Her mast’s gone by the board,” growled the old man, as he applied his glass to his eye, very calmly, “ and her rudder unshipped—yet she lives—she lives it out.”

“ Then she’ll be saved, won’t she ? she’ll ride the storm out, and get to shore—to harbour, won’t she ? ” So spoke both boys running up to each side of the speaker, and both tremulously, and both pale with fearful expectation, so many human lives at stake, for it was a large merchant ship. Their breathless waiting and fresh-hearted sympathy in the fate of the stranger (to *them*)—Man,—was curiously contrasted to that old man’s stern calm curiosity rather than pity—for after long disregard of their words and action, he at last re-echoed them, with a grim smile at their simpleness—“ *Ride* indeed—*shore* indeed ! Aye, aye, she’ll get to shore soon enow—she may float a bit, how should she ride ?—Her stern posts has been drove right through her poop too, it’s my belief.”

A dreadful sea now visibly broke over her, and we thought her gone. The boys gave a cry of terror and pity ; but the next minute she reappeared with a string of human bodies, their outlines visible to us as such, clustered all along one of the remaining masts, leaning fright-

fully like a lodgment of swarming bees on a bough, and in this condition hanging over their grave, those unhappy men and their ruins of a ship, were driven over several more reefs, each marked by the sailor's slight mutter, "Another reef!" but by a more fearful mark demonstrated to our eyes. For each concussion, otherwise invisible to us, was proved by the dropping of the weaker, from their frightful hold, into the vexed gulf, as they drove across the boiling path of the reef; so that the mast grew visibly thinner of human beings after each.

"Well! some are wrecked at sea, and some are wrecked ashore," said the old man, with the first sigh, or something like one, that he had vented; and this was for himself, I could detect, for (more than weather) some misery had left its trace on the otherwise half-obliterated picture of his sullen soul. His ruggedness, perhaps, might afford a clue to one cause of his discontent and apathy towards others.

"Is that the whole crew?" asked one of the lads.

"*Whole crew!*" he growled, in derision.

"Where's all the rest?"

"Well enough, boy,—down there, to be sure! Don't you know they were all on deck when the

good ship was laid on her beam-ends? These be but a few that snatched at mast and bowsprit—and they as are gone down had the best luck, you'll see; for there's no help, and very like she won't go down after 'em all night long: and there they'll be hanging as if they were gibbeted alive, and not have courage to let go and follow their messmates, that are gone to bed in the bed of the sea and care for no man, nor no weather, by this time—and are not cold yet."

I must make an end of this sad account, by adding, that the old Tar's words were almost fulfilled—that this miserable spectacle of the skeleton of the ship with its clinging men, remained throughout the storm, and had by nightfall drifted almost under Dunraven House promontory, a short distance from land, but such a heavy sea running, and such dreadful breakers, that no human aid was possible. This long dallying of Death with his prey, was indeed terrific.

We had been obliged to quit the beach, for we were all drenched through and through, but returned before bed-time, to the spot, where numbers were now assembled. The wreck had partly righted, but was expected every minute to go to pieces, she beat so violently, yet so near did she lie that the voices of the lost men

were heard clearly, though faint and full of the horror and wild pathetic intonations, peculiar to men about to die with full conviction of their doom.

Though the fierce blustering of the evening, though the fury of the storm had abated, it was a ghastly sight, that of the moon breaking through the flying clouds, and looking down on those miserable outcasts of life, that could not die; cut off from their own element, yet not dismissed to their rest, but hanging between sea and heaven. Ideas of calm and repose are inseparable from a moonlight sky. As our eyes were attracted up to it by the sudden glistening of the wet beach pebbles and the doubtful whiter gleaming (for it was but a half moon, and that watery and pale) of the showers of surf that were vaulting over those our fellow-creatures, chilling them to the heart—and we saw the ever gentle planet in a little plain of her own deep blue between clouds, it was doubly shocking to deject our eyes again to what was exhibited *below*, by its light! We imagined the tender or sullen tragedies of natural affections, or a fierce despair, then enacting in the hearts of those men—all the partings, all the recollected meetings with wives, parents, brothers, sisters, which were keeping an inward storm

there. Yet perhaps we erred. *Self*, perhaps, engrossed the entire man, in those dismal moments. Certain it is, that death before their eyes,—as one by one dropped from exhaustion or the shock of the wreck's beating, seemed to excite no lamentation or notice in the survivors, numbed and become inured to it as the common inevitable lot. One, however did, audibly, (for the wind and sea were now sinking) express some feeling, the nature of which we might variously conjecture: the mode of expression was at least very unexpected; but who, not so situated, shall predict his emotions? One of them, who had thus for many hours been 'gibbeted' too truly, by the side of a fellow-sufferer, of course unable to loose hold or quit his side a moment,—when his involuntary close companion at last yielded the strife, and was heard by him to plunge in the abyss, exclaimed loud enough to be heard by many on shore—"D—n you, are you going to leave me too?"* What a train of reflections does this strange exclamation excite on the nature of man, with its profanity, its horror, its tenderness (perhaps), and its despair!

Long before the wretched man's shipmate and wreckmate was cold, his companion went

* A recorded fact.

down after him, and not one was saved to tell whence that fine ship came or whither she was bound.

Remembering the glorified appearance she bore that morning, and looking at her *present*, as the poor naked ruin lay beating to pieces, with hollow horrid human voices coming on the wind, praying help that was impossible, the Rural Doctor could not help murmuring—as he sighed and pointed to that skeleton of the pride of the morning-sea, a little before the last of her disappeared—“Behold Human Life!”

NIGHT.

“ I leave to my fellow-traveller the description of his solitary Night.”—OSWALD.

“ It was near midnight when I reached the spot of beach where I was told the wreck was to be seen. I had never seen one, and a large vessel was stranded, and totally lost yesterday in the terrible storm of a day and night, which strewn the coast with dead ; bodies have been washed ashore in fearful numbers, the weather having been as awfully sudden as it was violent.

“ On one side I had a wall of precipices, their bases perforated by the higher seas into caverns, now showing their dark mouths by a deeper blackness, where all was dark, as the moon, though just above the top, did not light their sides, nor more than half the beach, so that I walked in the shadow, while looking on a beautiful silvered sea and even sands, but only those far out, it being low water.

“ Solemn melancholy capes and points of this

iron-bound coast jutted out one behind another, all before; the solitary sea assaulting their grim strengths, as exhibited by the white leap of surf, with measured faint-heard roar. All view of vegetation excluded, all was stone, sands, and lifeless brine, and illimitable yellow sea, its waves hardly tumultuous, yet keeping but a sort of muttering peace with the sky they so lately assailed, both mingling now in the distant deep-blue horizon of stars that seemed struggling through the tremulous waters. I had plodded my almost awful way to look at a new species of ruin (such to me); a home of man, but neither abbey nor tower; a ruin produced by a single hour's work of the element before me, instead of the slow year-by-year process of the more patient destroyer, Time, on the green and wall-flowered *wrecks* which turn to beauties under the reparations of sweet and all-restoring Nature, stealing soft behind him with her tints, her mosses, and her flowers.

“ But thus cut off from both nature and the busy haunts of men, and those men themselves at rest from their fierce and anxious struggles for a space, the deadeast hour of night at hand—my fearful curiosity about a single spectacle of piteous awe, became less lively—I began to regard *all* the concerns of life, as allied to

dreams and shadows—the lighted up and sounding homes of the living, beyond that monstrous wall, those shady piles of wildly battlemented granite, as not vastly differing from that sad fallen home dashed down in thunder on this strand of desolation :—a few flying years, and the happy tenants of those would be as the so much pitied outcasts of this, in their violent though bloodless deaths. I began to regard even myself, as scarcely longer anything of separate, much less eager and anxious interest, even *to* myself. Midnight—the stars—the sea—the solemn sound's immensity, the imposing calm—the yawning caves—the contrasted night of mountain-shadow, in which my single living form stole—and that paler sort of day, that was over all the expanse, with quivering rivers of brighter light, as the moon's long flashes appeared—all these summoned all my ideas to high and general contemplations, rather than human—to other worlds and systems, or to my own but as a planet, and myself as one warm atom thereon, now locomotive, presently cold and motionless ; but only exchanging one mode for another, of contributing a grain to a Universe.

“ Suddenly humanity re-asserted her claims. Darkening against the starry blue, leaned the

complex machinery of the lost ship's works, like a gigantic skeleton whose bones retained a thousand dried filaments to hold them together. There it leaned, overhanging its turbulent grave.

"I had hardly time to muse a minute, ere some seals, or some such objects, caught my eye, palpable from their loneliness of moveless black upon the whole breadth of silvered sands. I hurried to them, and looked upon three dead men, lying in various postures, but all denoting exertion even in the act of dying. One had a hen-coop clutched still,—another had his face buried in the sand, which he seemed to have died biting—they were, except one, half naked. But the struggle was past, however its image remained—their peace so profound, that it kept fine harmony with that of the elements.

"I could not resist the fascination of their grim presence. The beauty of moonlight just began where they lay—the long shadow of the mountain-cliffs, reached almost to their resting-place. The total absence of every object beside in the scarcely fluted smoothness of extensive sands, silvered by that mighty lamp, made as noble a lying in state as pride could devise; while the long long line of rather high billowy froth seen further out, and this

black shade close, combined to suggest the mean image of our finest palls and their most snowy fringes (of mere rag) except as belonging to Death, unworthy of admittance *there*.

“I thought of the fond wife’s arms which had so lately perhaps folded those manly forms, at parting!—of the *little* ones, that must never more be stretched out to them, to be taken in theirs, in the rapture of the return. Thinking *backward* a little, I recollected how, not long ago, other arms—the maternal, were held out to the infant totterings of these limbs, whose *last* efforts had been spent in this lone and shocking wrestling with Death—their *first* full of tender joy for that young mother, who cried out if they but failed, falling on a carpet or soft sod! I marked the blue bruised and bloody knees, that had burst the strong sailor-dress, or the sharp rocks had reached through its strength—those knees never more to support the child, or transported wife throwing herself on that bruised bosom; perhaps this moment *dreaming* such pleasant moment, and weeping in her sleep for joy.

“Seeing one whose head seemed oddly shrunk down into his jacket-collar (the only one drest) I could not help stooping to lift the dead face which I found strangely fallen forward on the

bosom ;—when I was horrified (alas, why?) by a perfectly polished *skull*, instead of the expected hairy head behind, and a shocking little sodden mass of the whole ‘human face divine’ *slid* down, before, so as to resemble a filthy wrap over the chin of a death’s-head.

“This was evidently an old voyager of the under-currents of the deep, cast up, (along with these *fresh* ones, oddly) by the late mighty upturning of its profounder depths—or possibly, it was a body found floating, and taken up by some vessel to be brought for burial ashore, and thus wrecked *again*, and its preservers with it, ere they could fulfil the merciful intent.

“And thinking *forward*, a little, I reflected that I needed not to pity these poor beings more than myself. Age is the shipwreck-shore, the grave those funereal sands, to me and all men. To die clutching a hand, if a fond one, may *seem* preferable to holding a hen-coop or oar, but all is one ; and so is it to bite a pillow or wet seaside sands.

“Thus pondering over Death, I felt forcibly what was Life—

‘ Somnus, bulla, vitrum, glacies, flos, fabula, fœnum,
Umbra, cinis, punctum, vox, sonus, aura—NIHIL ! ’ ”

THE
MOUNTAIN-DECAMERON.

TENTH DAY.

ARGUMENT—UM AD HOMINEM.

JOSEPH DOWNES,

Doctor of Medicine and Surgeon Extraordinary to The Welsh Mountains, to the Reader:
—Greeting,

SIR! or MADAM!

Be pleased to take unto yourself one of these compliments, *secundum rem*, as WE of the faculty say, *mutatis mutandis*; in short, whichever you find yourself! Upon the hypothesis of your being of the feminine gender, but exercising the domestic functions of both—*vulgo* “wearing the breeches,”—or on another hypothesis which my incessant researches in

natural history luckily cause to pop into my head this moment—take *both* : in which event it must stand thus;—

SIR and MADAM,

I, the above-mentioned, the only *genuine* “Rural Doctor” of Brecknockshire, beg to appear before your most excellent Beauty, or your consummate Taste, or both, as author of the title-page; of the preface; also of sundry blunders in these volumes. But my occasion to intrude, is to explain the cur-tail-ed condition of this last (which ought to be the most swelling and pompous of all,) of these Days, as well as certain other matters. Against *res adversas*, any more than against *res angustas*, alas! there is no striving. Now I being in a state of the purest babe-like innocence of all craft in book-making, had amassed a prodigious stock of my friend Mr. Oswald ——’s “Days, Evenings,” &c. at random, and some of the Tales of that *pseudo*-Rural Doctor who has imposed himself on his Quaker-credality for very ME. Now when I came to try to make use of these with my most respectable Publisher, I found, *imprimis*, that this melange of poetry in *prose*—these efforts at passion-painting—(God

knows, the *Doctor's* part is daub with a vengeance!)—these wild orations (or burlesques thereof) about politics, and everything, *et quibusdam aliis*—could only be published in the usual form of *novel*, the limits whereof are somewhat restricted. Though to me the contents, I confess, bear little resemblance in reading to the modern novel, (excellent or common-place,) and if not *suorum generum*, if not original, do yet seem to want all family likeness to the three-volume continuous story, as I suspect every reader will opine—still, I say, expedience being the order of the day, these Days, &c. were submitted to its dictates. A great Publisher knoweth best what bulk *his* patients will swallow of his commodity, just as a great Doctor, like myself, best judges the *volume* of mine—from a pin's head pill up to a bolus like a bullet. And what was to be done with the surplus? This was no *Irish* one—*my* chickens were hatched and cackling! I had not to legislate upon “airy nothing.” Here was a huge bundle of “sayings,” hot from head and heart; ‘full of fury,’ if ‘signifying nothing’: and this my surplus was to be returned “to *lie* in dark oblivion, and to rot!” Thus obliged to select, mutilate, reject, and

prefer, I confess that (always excepting the *stuff* by that impostor, quack, cheat, Londoner, foreigner, and political eaves-dropper—in a word, *Tory*,) the matter so charmed me, that I never had such an Agamemnonian—such a Jephtha-like task in all my life, as to thus decimate my (foster) offspring! They had jolted with me, behind me, in my portmanteau, on my pony: I had got used to the look of them, till I could find beauty in their very blots. Moreover, dreams would come over me by fits, of the pretty penny made by this or that novel-writer who is—*popular*. “There’s the rub!” And I thought, “What if poor dear dead * Mr. Oswald —, (with whose life and *death* I had

* I beg here to say, that though of the same Christian name, this gentleman was *not* that respectable member of the Society of Friends, also of my profession, the recollection of whose amiable character, urbane manners, simple and happy mode of primitive life, has attached me to even the name, ever since my short experience of them long ago (alas!) under his hospitable roof. I owed my first knowledge of Bloomfield, and imbibed some portion of taste for rural things, from a Quakeress—this gentleman’s wife,—who used to read or repeat his “Oh, winds blow not so long and loud,”—and admire his poetry, though not “Quaker-poetry.” Mr. — “Neighbour” O. F. of H., will probably not read this; but if he should, will, I hope, excuse this reference to him by one of the “unconvinced.”

more to do than living man besides,) should make *my* fortune, after he 's in his grave, after all, by this roll of MSS.?" No wonder I found it impossible to *reject any*. Every one had something to plead. Oh, *this* was so pretty: oh, that was *so* tender, or so eloquent: or (if bombastic and fantastic), oh, it was *so* just to the taste of the times! Thus I went on, thrusting my stories, &c. into the triple-bodied omnibus of this work, till behold! over-number! So here stand shivering many poor souls, the finest of all!—refused entrance, like ghosts on the bank of Styx. But what is worst, here is one cut in half, waiting like Plato's half-creature, forlorn for want of that dear kindred other half, it is so rarely doomed to rejoin! Julian Acosta—those "*membra disjecta*" of a tragedy to which I have been forced to act a part like that of Medea to her brother, or those naughty women to poor Orpheus, or the giant Cyclops to his prey—(torn to pieces to strew round his cave),—Julian Acosta, I say, must stand as a fragment—a very common form of insertion; so no grumbling, gentle Sir, or august Madam (or both), you have but to write above with pencil *vel* crow-quill, "A Fragment." I thought the parent thereof would not think it amiss to stick

it thus piecemeal about "my book," but prefer it to the great honour of seeing it adorn a Thespian booth in the fair of St. Bartholomew of blessed memory (even on the *chance* of its ever attaining *that* glory), supposing it published as "Julian Acosta, A TRAGEDY!!"

But supposing (again) that any dear reader should fume and fret, and pine his soul out to be thus cut short in his hunger of curiosity—let him take comfort. He hath but to *engage* to buy up a good corpulent edition of "A Second Series,"—(ah, *that's* the word!) of that most popular "Work"—(yes, cynical Sirs, "WORK,") The Mountain-Decameron; and I answer for my publisher and self, that Julian Acosta shall be a fragment no longer! Moreover, I can tell that dearest of readers, in what way to *get off* all the rest of his Mountain-Decamers *on hand*, after his enjoying his one copy. A word in your ear, Sir—* * * *—and so, you see, after that, you'll have only to fling out all the *drug*-part, those vile *serious* flights of poetry—don't let too much *thought* overlay your pretty bantlings, (I call the altered Decameron *yours*,) find some story (they 're plenty as blackberries) in some nation or æra, that contains a faint feature or two like some one of these tales; distort the *fact* a little, and adopt

the tale as it stands now—a little, and then swear boldly it's the "Historical Romance of—God knows what!" If the original heroine be a princess and the other heroine a rustic,—oh, that's the "*licentia vatum*." If the original be laconic, and occupy a few pages of vivid graphic writing, and this (as, alas! is the case) have a hundred words for its one—oh, that's all the beauty of the thing—what genius! Look, how you've dilated the thing! Now it's like a setting sun—in a fog! *Everybody* can look at its tempered beam now—now it's everybody's reading; now it's just to the taste of the age! No outlandish force—no furious heats—no dog-day intensity—but—just like sunbeams through—a cucumber! Happy *you*, the transfiguring *genius*—the wonderful "magician!"

What if you cut out most of the love-dialogue, and make *your* lovers meet by the light of a volcano instead of the moon?—wander by a river of lava in full speed, instead of Towey or Tivey? There is great beauty in thus associating moral and physical nature. A deep sigh of your hero-lover might be responded by a crack of the mountain's entrails; and when the lovers burst into "floods of tears," suppose a water-spout that moment to come plump

down exactly into the jaws of the crater? (c-r-a-t-e-r, Ladies, please to mark, not the jaws of the *fair* creature, recollect.) What hissing; what spitting in the face of Heaven; what *steam-engine* “pother o’er our heads;” what scampering; what scald-heads everywhere (I mean scalded); what a *scene*; what dead, dying, and blistered! In short, what *materiel* for modern romance, considered as material for —melodrame, in its next and fitting stage — *the* stage! I defy man to show me why my water-spout shall not burst over my volcano, as well as anywhere else—where is the impossibility? Enough! “*Verbum sapientibus,*” is as WE say, “*quantum sufficit!*” I’m sure you may then call the book your own, and sell off some editions.

But doubtless the sequel of Julian Acosta alone will repay you for the little waste of the other copies. How Magdalene Mosheim, in those moral hurricanes attending such vicissitudes in the rapid revolutions of her nature, wrought by sufferings, did the very next day after her interview in the prison with Julian, when she so bitterly felt the want of some hold on his religious faith—*herself* almost dare to shake that respect for the obligation of an oath in an innocent girl, her bosom friend, whose swearing to the fatal bracelet covered with blood, in the

impending trial, must (if it should prove what Magdalene had herself bound on Julian's wrist)—prove fatal to her lover—*husband*, by troth.—How she notwithstanding felt fully the horror of her thus tampering, and for *such* a purpose!—to save a father's murderer.—How *yet* again—Virtue itself—the virtue of gratitude—seemed to demand pity for him who had plunged into blood over soul and all—to save *her*—How this conflict affected *her*—how her friend,—how both swore at last to *conceal* each from other the fact, (if so detected by the bracelet) that the lover or the brother must be henceforth a wretch to them—execrable and to be shuddered at—How the trial scene passed—How they all came within the “haunting” sphere of our Hermit-Errant of Wales—These things, and many more, “are they not written” in sundry quires of foolscap and post outsides, which cost me sixpence per quire? Are they not all reposed (*not pasted*) in my travelling trunk? From the cramped extent of our limits, it has also arisen, that a story referred to in a note to the Preface, does not here appear—neither doth “David Beynon, the Father's Tale”—a great disappointment, inasmuch as that short story met the approval of a literary gentleman of eminence. (*de gustibus non disputandum!*) I say nothing. *If* it be good—it is *not* that

(*iste !*) Rural Doctor's *own*—that's poz ! Having named him, I shall only say further that he is either a shadow of the Quaker's conjuring up, or, if flesh and blood, an impostor. We Doctors are "too thick on the ground" already. *My* patients want no "further advice." Brecknockshire he will find too hot for him ; albeit it pinches *my* nose, and turns blue most noses. I wish no better fortune than to light on him, in *my* neighbourhood, *gipseying* (if he dare to cast a sheep's eye to *practice*, if "to espy the nakedness of the land he be come")—some time, when I am riding at speed to a patient, with my largest pewter syringe shining in my right hand, and a dirty ditch at my left ! His self, his two homunculi, his tent, all—all shall experience a glorious 'jet d'eau !' by St. David and the Land of Leeks, *all* shall !

"Ah ! *leeks !*" I said, writing the word, "this moment, in this Babylon. Leeks ! where are ye ? Far away ! Leek-broth ! What *links* of thought ye are, in linked *sweetness* long drawn out !" Said I to myself, two years ago, "I'll go to school again ! Though too *young* (God bless the mark !) to be of the "Old School"—I shall live to *become* so yet, if I don't furbish up my knowledge. So off I set for a winter or two in this stinking town, with scarcely a live

hog in it (except biped), and the devil a nanny-goat. I threw into my leathern post-appendage to my poney, my poor dear dead friend's scrawls, (in case they *might* make a penny) which strutted it out so much, that my mare became a very fashionable lady. For the hair of my port-manteau, and of her *pars innominata*, being both abraded a bit, the peeping dead and living leather had a resemblance, so that in dusk, the most elegant of our Fashionables (our most *delicate-tasted* belles) would have envied her! For what is imitation to *Nature*? What a *bustle*—a mock——*pars innominata*, I demand, to a *real*? When I was a boy, I remember well a beauty *something like* one in Piccadilly—the “Hottentot Venus”—to be seen for a shilling. Oh, these degenerate days! Was not such *natural* charmer better worth that “bob” than *these* spurious charmers (mere mimics of her,) are worth a look? “Oh the days when I was young!”—“*Laudator temporis acti*,” indeed! and what *wise-man* must not be? No! not a cloak like a coal-sack with a hole in the bottom for your fair head to peep out—nor your pretty shoulders and elbows (when thus enveloped, resembling a *coal-heaver's* back for all the world) Not—but let me stop—not the quantity of clothing, you carry, enough to warm ten poor

shivering creatures, becoming beasts of burthen to your own dress—not even this, rolled enormous round your fair forms, (to the spy laughter and *pocket*-comfort of your mercers, &c. and no doubt to the infinite content of your husbands, &c. who pay for your lovely monstrosity, patient butts to that mercer's mirth)—alas! I say, fair and tasteful creatures, what *are* you, after all, to——“the Hottentot Venus?” Nature *versus* Art, for ever! Well—where was I? Oh! trotting up to town—book and bustle—bag and baggage. One winter I spent and thought not of the MSS. The next——“Egad,” says I, “this living in this *town* is no joke to the pocket! Not an oatcake for love or money! Not a leek—(unless a *Leeke-pill*, I don't know what taste *they* have.) Butter-milk out of the question. *Cwrrw*—oh sweet fat *cwrrw*!—that too, *caret*!—(vocative oh! indeed!) Nothing for the poor starving Operative world here, but hog's flesh, and bull's flesh, and white bread, and stout, and gin! They may *well* cry out—*well* be seditious! God help them, poor souls, and send them better times, I say! Plenty of our hearty leek broth, with a good bone and a flint in it! and strong black barley bread, or oats, ground by hand, in a cake, washed down by

plenty of cut-throat sour *cwrrw*, or whey! Flummery's for the great. As for *flummery* here, there's none of that neither, only what's from the mouth of a Metropolitan Candidate, or a mob to a bullying Papist, or a little Minister beslabbering a great "Public Principle." So thinking and *feeling*, I turned my thought to the MSS. "Every penny helps," methought, "and Publishers are reputed very liberal, and where they can be, with duty to their own just views and families' interest, I dare say they are. If Mediocrity *sells*, they can afford to buy it, and if Genius (were it transcendent) does *not* sell, why are they to ruin themselves by turning amateurs instead of merchants? and besides, *cui bono*? if the Public will let it "lie on the shelf?" That I found a publisher, this appearance sheweth. I have explained *why* no regular finish here appears, and to the same cause is to be attributed the meagre figures the poor Major, Parson, and my poor departed friend make in these Dialogues. A great deal more was said and done by them in the too copious original. But as none of that brilliancy which produced such a sensation on the appearance of the Noctes Ambrosianæ has been thrown over these Dies and Noctes—the loss will be

less regretted. Having a most extensive practice, I must now, as winter is past, hurry home, hoping I may not have been wanted, and heartily bid you and London farewell.

Sir or Madam,
or, Sir-Madam,
Respectfully yours to death,
THE RURAL DOCTOR.

A VOICE FROM THE LIVING TO THE DEAD.

I am a Poet!—laugh thy fill,
 Insolent World! I feel—I know it!
 Be it to own a mortal ill,
 Or claim the *Mind's* own Peerage,—still,
 I say—*I am a Poet!*
 Ask ye my name? 'Tis one ye ne'er
 Have heard,—that ye shall never hear;
 Fame's trump will never blow it;
 Not one that hears my passing bell,
 Shall know it is a Poet's knell;
 Let them not know it!

The Sexton, and that death-bell small
 That tinkles midst my mountains, must
 Be *my* grey Fame, my trump, my all;—
 Or Silence—the clod's triple fall,
 And three words—'Dust to dust!'
 Who said that "when a poet dies,
 Mute Nature celebrates his obsequies?"*

* Call them not vain—they do not err
 Who say that when a Poet dies
 Mute Nature mourns her worshipper,
 And celebrates his obsequies.

Lay of the Last Minstrel.

True—but *Man* too, to *thee* was just,—
 Europe re-echoed *thy* death-groan,
 A mourning world for the “Unknown.”
 For the departed Bard made moan,
 Soon slacked *thy* temperate thirst
 Of Glory, thou from its full draught,
 To Nature turned’st—*her* purer quaffed,
 And with that mighty Mother laughed
 Thy soul who nursed.

Oh, Dead! I am a poet too!
 Should your ghost ask me, ‘by what token?’
 Meek Catechist! I’d speak the true
 Last words I never would have spoken,
 But to “mute Nature’s” ear, and you,
 Reclined above those mountains blue!
 Read *here*, in breast and brain the token;
 Heart, hopes, dreams—all but spirit—broken,
 Ah, yes! ev’n spirit too;
 For this foul fierce *departing* spirit,
 Is not the same I did inherit,
 Nature! from you.

Wildness of wish—Thoughts limitless,
 The *want* of Mankind—the distaste,
 The *want* of Home—Home’s weariness;
 The rage for Change no change can bless;
 Grief for Time’s flight—Time’s *waste*—
 Vague greatness of aims undefined,
 That glorious *Mirage* of the Mind,
 Th’ *oasis* that so greenly shined,
 Limned on Hope’s vapoury vast;
 Which—ever followed, never found,
 Chained me, in its charmed *desert* ground,
 To die at last —————

The pent up passions—the dumb rage—
The living burial of Neglect ;
The faint and fainter heart to wage
Life's war, when all Life's hopes are wrecked—
Self-hate, lost self-respect,
The hopes so sunken, mind so high,
The fear that fights the wish—to die,
A lone Heart baying at the Sky,—
(Like death-struck wolf uncheck'd,
In some night-wilderness)—what see'st
Thou, in these traits ? the “ god or beast ? ”
This bared breast, like Rome's Augur-priest,
Deign to inspect !

A man-of-war's dismantled hulk,
Though *lost*, may yet yield index true,
What *was* its metal, draught and bulk,
Though dumb its thunders, dead its crew,
And whole seas bursting through ;
The horridier that war-ship's wreck,
With black blood blistering o'er the deck
The more destruction strew,
The more proof of a conflict grand,
Though He, in whose unseen right hand
Is Conquest,—on some shipwreck-strand,
Cast ship and crew !

Beating on Passion's restless sea,
So, with a weight of dead, a Poet,
Dead fires, dead energies—may be
His own sad epitaph, to shew it,
Though only by his sad undoing,
More utter wreck, more hideous ruin,
Till all may see and know it ;

Though not a triumph, not a bliss,
 Sprung from *his* strife—the sole part his,
 To scowl about Earth's wilderness—
 Then hide below it.

Nor marvel that a spirit all
 Unkindred thus appeals to thine;
 'Tis therefore, therefore that I call!
 For seeing that the "fire divine"
Can beautifully shine,
 Seeing *thy* life's stream softly glide
 Like thine own "Tiviot's silver tide,"*
 So gentle yet so glorified,
 I stand amazed—I pine,—
 I ask of Heaven, of quick and dead,
 Why what beamed glory round *thy* head,—
 Warmth to *thy* heart, has rained down red
 Hot coals on mine?

My fiery summons of the god,
 Far different, ran along *my* veins,
 Like that war-firebrand quenched in blood,
 Which,—sped along your Northern plains,†
 Made men of blood of simple swains,
 Such war, such woe, such pains,

* Sweet Tiviot, on thy silver tide
 The glaring batefires blaze no more;
 No longer steel-clad warriors ride
 Along thy wild and willowed shore."—SCOTT.

† The brand quenched in blood, which, transferred from
 hand to hand, summoned the feudal class *instantly* to battle.

Vide Lady of the Lake.

Such change, this Nessus-gift has brought,
To me—of fire from heaven caught ;
Whose light went out in fogs of Thought,—
Whose curse remains !

Yes—as the shepherd, whom that black
And blood-dipped signal reached, (to damn !)
Might not ev'n to his fold go back,
But leave to die the new-dropt lamb,
Nor bear it to its dam,
Which his kind arms were bearing——thus,
Touched by the fire-brand Genius,
My nature changed ; forbore to nurse
Each gentiler-blessing flame ;
Like him come back, a wretch—come back
To no fold, to no home,—but black
Gorse, thorns, *Life's* night-moor without track—
I stand—(a fierce Regret my rack)—
The thing I am.

EVENING.

On the shore of the Bay of Beaumaris.

A PARTY at tea, with a gipsy-fire, and all appliances, on extensive sands lately covered with sea, has a singular look. We form that party this evening. There is something of brave defiance of the Deep about it. A glorious evening, or rather dying day! The burnished gold that the whole glassy sea seemed heaving in a molten state lately, begins to turn to rose-colour, from a thick haze westward, which waves its thick-moated purple banner, very fast up and over the floor of waves. Already we begin to lose the sort of bloom flung over the air and waters by those beautiful clouds resembling vast disordered parterres of flowers in heaven—flowers tinted beyond those of this *nether* paradise.

For is not this world a paradise in such hours of balmy calm as these, could minds but be always in unison with the elements? It seems a mournful reflection that the same mind

which never escapes a shadowing, a gloom, a despondent pang from the scowl of a turbulent heaven,—yet misses its peace, its little recompense, of a deceitful cheering, a hundred evenings or mornings of untroubled beauty in the sky. It can *always* be depressed; but exhilarated by no means *always*. That is the defect that a fine *evening* scene has for men declined in years; its beauty is too tinged with melancholy—too much akin to the decay of Life, the closing of all prospects. In the mornings, when a long bright blue track is cut, as it were, through a cloudy heaven—by a wind, the human mind, without reasoning, rests on a sympathetic dream, of some brighter way bursting thus, on earth, on *its* melancholy foggy world below—the eye, resting on the ethereal highway, lets in a sort of delusive light to its sullenness, which is pleasant like hope, or serves instead of it. But this mixture of glory and decay in evening—this shining so sweetly, and dying so rapidly at once, in the celestial picture, is at once sweet and tragical, and bears no affinity to what *stirs* hearts, even in young breasts. Vague hope of a *less* terrific—a more bearable dying, is the utmost of its niggard solace to the heart grown old and ill at ease. Yet how beautifully glorious! it is

a scene to make a man long to live for ever, could *it* continue, and *he* continue—*statu quo*!

Such a stillness prevails, that we catch distinctly the talk of some fishermen out some way, in that white-sailed skiff. We hear a bleat now and then high up those sort of wild downs of greensward that ascend directly from the shore, in some parts in the long long line of varied coast, with many breaks, whence we also catch the lulling murmur of some inland stream there ending its long course, like a wanderer of the world, that has found his a sad and wild one, (like this our land of stern prospect and shipwreck-shores) yet, after many falls, has fought all its rocks at last, to gain—what? That last sullen one in Eternity!—yet fortunate, if departing with only such a milder melancholy of moan, as that nameless mountain-river is sending to our ears. The heave and fall of this sea, already rather murky, resembles that of some most mighty bosom in respiration—so regular, so calm, so majestic! Yet gentle almost to infant placidity, like the spirit of “Peace and Goodwill toward men—Glory to God on high”—commingled and embodied to the sense under the form of an element! So sublime, so strong, yet innocuous.

The sultriness of the stagnant air is begin-

ning to exhibit itself in vapours. Electric flashes play beautifully round the magnificent circle of our view. The haze that preceded the sun's (recent) last subsiding in the waves, gave the dilated orb a grand and strange appearance of vibration, from its own minute agitations; a blood-red and trembling sun! Presently the haze thickened to a fog—behind which the disc went down almost unseen. The fog is now deepening to dark, by the nightfall, not otherwise visible. All that beautiful mist, and that glorified gloom, is thus rapidly degenerated into a dark foul fog—ominous of thunder and a night of storm.

Yet we kept our place awhile, (the far-out tide permitting) our tents being up a green wild ravine, not far off, and our talk took a turn from the moods inspired by these “signs in the front of heaven” perhaps. Obscurations of the glorious luminary Reason, in this mysterious little “Purple Island,” as Phineas Fletcher calls the human body, became our topic, the wonders of Monomania—Madness on a single subject; and I shall transmit this (to us) novel species of Dialogue for the Last.—The Doctor, however, interposed a short poem from his “Unknown Poets” list.

THE SCEPTIC'S SOLILOQUY BY A GRAVE.

LORD ! let me live awhile—

A little longer yet, Hope's lore to learn !

Death to the soul should not be in that smile,

Nor this vile hole so fair a spirit's urn.

Thou savest, by a seed, the herb,

The meanest, creeping parasitical ;—

Wilt Thou not *this* superb,

This glorious growth upstretching for heaven's wall,

Thy throne, yon beautiful Empyreal ?

Oh, must *this* Immaterial,

Like some rich clustering vine, that wants an elm,

Drop—and let earth o'erwhelm ?

I stand, as in a cave,

A mighty cave's mouth on some grand strange shore,

Behind—dark depth,—before, th' illimitable wave ;

My standing time, 'twixt tide and tide—no more !

A silver-winged white bird, by fits,

Across my prison-darkness gleams,

Just beautifully flits,

Yet is heaven's sunlight on its wings—or *seems*,

Whence come, or whither gone, Sight's scope,

Forbids to find 'neath that cave's cope ;

That is Immortal Hope !

Time's dim vast, ere my birth, that depth of cave—

And oh ! that rapid rising wave,

Th' *Annihilating* grave !

My Soul ! my Soul ! my Soul !
 Darkling companion down this vale of tears,
 Oh ! yet, ere reached yon earthly goal,
 Break this sad shocking secresy of years !
 Speak to me ! answer me ! I 'll call
 Thee " sister !"—lurk no more thus dumb, thus lone !
 Say, am I " earthy " all ?
 Oh, must we part, as we have lived, unknown ?
 As one for his dear dead, ere ever hid ;
 Prys through her coffin-lid,—
 With such sad solemn curiosity,
 (When our own paled clay coffins, we)
 Man prys, Man cries for thee !
 Mysterious hermitess !
 My forty-years' *companion*, yet unknown,
 How live we on, companionless !
 And must I die, as I have lived,—*alone* ?
 Like some fair feeling galley-slave,
 Chained to a muffled bark, this mind hath rowed
 this log,
 Thy dwelling-place, 'gainst wind and wave,
 Silence within,—all round unbounded fog ;
 And *thou* Twin-Sister, art in this white bark,
 Men say, yet through this dark,
 This dusk, this horror, this near thundering fall,
 Vouchsaf' st no voice at all !
 Oh ! it was bearable,
 This mournful silence, while the day was new,
 When this Doubt's fog now terrible,
 Was but a white mist in the morning blue ;
 Perplexing young Devotion's eye,
 Not blinding quite—when flowers of human birth
 With *their* meek galaxy,
 Cast such a bloom as shut out heaven from earth :

Oh ! now when curtains heaven far other cloud—
 Now when Thought's strong wings, no more proud,
 Are folded in a shroud—
 So short the space betwixt those worms and me—
 Coy, cruel guest ! now speak, speak ! speak, or be
 Dumb everlastingly !

NIGHT.

The same Sea Shore.

“ For Heaven's sake let us sit upon the ground,
 And tell sad stories of the death of ”—Mind.

SHAKESPEARE.

“ What do you think of these lines ? ” asked
 the Doctor.

“ ‘ Wrapp'd in night's shade without, within as dark,
 Secure he creeps to quench the vital spark ;
 Nor thinks, weak man, it bears that mightiest fire,
 Which not mankind could quench, should all conspire.
 What though the bark it quickened, drop away,
 Stripped off by violence, or slow decay,
 The spirit then for glorious flight prepares,

* * * * *

As earth to earth, she, whence she sprung afar ;
 An upward-shooting everlasting star.’

*From PROVIDENCE, an unpublished Poem, written by a
 Maniac in 1801, who died in the same year.*

That is part (I forget one line) of a rather long piece of poetry, written by a young clergyman, while under Monomania, (the idea of being watched by murderers,) and which impression ended fatally,—driving him, on pure religious ground, to prevent the meditated (and imagined inevitable) crime of another, by his own act. At least, this was the view taken of his case, I believe, he being impressed with the idea of being, the next moment, rushed upon in the dark. Of all curious horrors, surely Monomania is the most curious. That young man was of exemplary morals, and deeply religious bias. Having deserted his living of Bredgar, in Kent, under this delusion, he resided under the same roof with me, then a boy. I slept with him all the while (how unalarming and *sane* his *conduct* was, may be guessed by my being allowed to do so). His last action every night, after piling all the furniture of our room against the door, and then saying his prayers, was to cock his pistols, and lay them within reach. It was in the night-time he mostly wrote his poem, (rational throughout, though not above mediocrity in merit, I think now, as far as I remember, who was but young) getting up and striking light. Very often I used to be waked up, and to see him standing

in the moonlight, or dusk, with a pistol in each hand, listening, as fancying persons ready to burst in. Odd it is, I never felt the least fear. Indeed, in some hours more, I should be (often) walking, led in his hand, to a chapel where he would officiate on Sundays for his father, and nobody dreamed of his malady. I remember he once went to some barracks (I think near Portman Square), to request military aid, to secure the house, (in the *then* Hamilton Street, Piccadilly,) some piled stones having alarmed him. An officer came, and, being told by his father the melancholy case asked, as he passed through a room where the young man sat,—in his hearing, whether the poor young man was in confinement? His father, deeply affected, as soon as he got outside, whispered him, ‘*That* is he.’ He was letting his house, tithe, and glebe, on lease, with one person, and doing business with another, also his parishioner, and nothing defective was found in all he did.

“I can’t help telling (*why* should we be so secret where there is no crime?) the striking fates of several of those young men—brothers. He and a brother were bred to a trade. Both rebelled against the Counter, and (sadly to

their parent's sorrow, no doubt) came home to *study*, for the Church, and the profession of Surgery. And, in a very short space, one was settled on a living (the one I named), the other was receiving £170 per annum, as surgeon in a military hospital, at home. He was become 'an excellent anatomist,'—on the authority of one eminent himself—(Mr. Keate, I think); the other had mastered Greek enough to enjoy the drama of Athens in the original, and in two years more both were dead by their own hands. The announcement of the *surgeon's* death, by a letter, from some one at Gosport, has *riveted* on my nerves a curious association. No bells heard over water, by moonlight, nor the most pathetic air, the least approaches in pathos, to my ears, the coarse sea-song of Tom Bowling. I would not willingly hear it, where mine were watched by other eyes. A rough sailor-beggar was bawling it in the street, while the father, who had just received the son's box, was exclaiming, so that I could hear in the garden, where I had run, out of the distracted house—'Oh, my poor boy!'

"Yet I was too young to feel at all *acutely* for *him* myself. He had been little with me. (The

burial, under a yew-tree, of a little visitor-dog, called Tiney, affected me much more ; yet the association has been thus imperishable.

“ A cousin of their’s, bred at Oxford, took a different course :—after being in orders, and having always protested that he would never pass twenty-four hours in a prison, he rushed on in a course inevitably urging him thither ; went in, and *literally* kept his mad resolve. Yet *he* was not deemed insane. I pass *another* brother, whose boy-marriage, and its dire results, might well account for any catastrophe ; because what I deduce is, that *one* and the *same* impulse actuated those three young men, in both the honourable and the disgraceful course. The father was no sort of *genius*, but a strong-minded man. He suffered much. He also suffered from the great conceit in his own infallibility of a Lord Chancellor. I know no reason why I should not add, Lord Loughborough. His Lordship’s lady was so much pleased with the clergyman’s classical progress with her two nieces, (he only visiting Bedford Square, for their tuition, twice a week,) that she teased his Lordship for preferment, *which he promised*—and *large* preferment.

“ Meanwhile a Prince fell in love, and thought once not enough to be married to the dear ob-

ject, so got married *at home* in disguise, and the poor tutor chanced to be the officiating priest—in utter ignorance. He was fully acquitted of all knowledge of his Royal Highness by the Privy Council—not so in the *mind* of the Scottish Infallible. On a large living becoming vacant, Lady Loughborough put in her plea, but nothing could persuade the great Law Officer that the poor parson did not recognise the Guelph features, and on *this ground only* he refused to confer the benefice. Alone, this was trying to a man so conscious as he was, of not having forfeited his claim to promised patronage.

“But he suffered more than this. For Lady Loughborough had, on the full conviction of her power to obtain him preferment, advised his resigning a Kentish living, (just given to him by the Bishop of Bristol) in favour of a son—the unfortunate one I told you of. This was done; and the one *in prospectu* lost by that unjust suspicion; and very soon after, the resigned vicarage also—by, and with, that more fatal loss, an exemplary son in the bloom of life.

“I have grounds to believe that the Illustrious Duke knew of the injustice thus suffered by the clergyman, who married him, enveloped in a disguising dress, and attending the church at

the hour of eight in the morning, standing at the rail among couples of the lowest orders. I do not *assert* this, however, because *this* brother of my King does not belong to that party, the belonging to which makes it 'Liberal' and manly, and moral, and Reformer-like to foully belie him, and insult him, and despitefully use him and persecute him. Moreover, I've no wish to follow such example, (though *Ministerial*—so *loyal*, of course) but I do believe that he knew (and knows if the thought could be believed ever to recur) that the curate of St. George's, Hanover Square, did (besides his peril of transportation) suffer this injustice for his Royal Highness's love-frolic or sense of Duty. On what remote causes hangs every man's fate ! My own destination in life was changed by that failure of the expected benefice. But for that, I might have been now, in what I deem of all possible conditions the most *capable* of perfect bliss—that of a country-priest. Change of designed profession changes more than outer character, sometimes. My studies and researches ran into other channels. I could never bear to be an insincere priest ; but I think a sincere, self-satisfied, pious pastor, friendly in his little village circle, the most enviable of men. But how idle is it to talk

what we *should* have been, but for this or that event! ‘Trifles light as air’ might have equally driven us ‘ten thousand leagues aside,’ as that important *one*! The mother of those parties lived to old age, perfectly sane, except that the last two or three years she became otherwise through a paralytic stroke.

“One happiness attended the fates of those young men, that they never became parents. Madness *once* evolved, I conceive, becomes hereditary, but *never* while only latent.

“I can imagine no feeling so horrible as that of a parent who has *ever been* insane, while looking on a beloved child. To watch, (and tremble while we watch) a little favourite born of a consumptive mother, is a fearful pain of heart, where the least token is espied or conceived of the hereditary canker-worm, in the too soft feature, or the flush too vivid on the young cheek; but what is that to watching the young *mind*, perhaps fated to worse than death?—to fearing that we, who could not bear to witness an ache inflicted on the innocent happy being—the least injury—one tear drawn——*we* ourselves have involuntarily inflicted on it the most deadly of injuries? To the *first* source of anxiety I am myself no stranger. To the last I am; for, though I confess to *eccentricity*

—and will *define* what Madness is, when any one has justly defined *Mind*—*and not till then*—still I maintain that Eccentricity is *often* far nearer to wisdom—that is, the *perfect* exercise of intellect—than common-place habits are. I must venture one example. ‘I solemnly assure you,’ said my dusty companion, who was pulling a polypus about, very curiously, one moment, a sea-weed the next, and really looking as little of the city ‘M. D.’ as can be imagined, ‘I know myself enough to say, that I would refuse, without one instant’s thought, the most extensive practice, the most popular physician could offer me, *gratis*—only on the condition of *my* precisely preserving *his* ‘state’.—Many would think this, if true, a sign of a defect in judgment, a strangeness hinting of madness. Now the (*obvious to me*) fact is, that I were mad *not* to refuse. I know that most physicians live up to their incomes, through pride, or it may be prudence, their ‘poor pomp’ extending their (to me) poor fame. Hence his thousand, or two, or three per year, would be to me merely as the water in the sieves of the poor ladies of the Pagan hell—and as despising his ‘state,’ what should I gain? Why the *misery* of mounting several hundred city stairs every day, instead of the

soul-felt pleasure I now enjoy of mounting the narrow ruinous ones of some ivy-grown castle ruin, or abbey's solemn cloisters. I should not benefit my offspring by keeping a pack of servants, or a fine carriage. *My* madness then would consist in preferring peace, and a pure pleasure, to pure unmitigated pain and turmoil—a most insane choice certainly! Yet wouldst not even *thou*, Friend Oswald, half incline to think with the world in this, rather than with me?"

Here let me entreat, friend Hogg! thine and my reader's indulgence for so much said on a subject that may seem so unsuitable to the nature of this Decameron, as Madness. That it is one of intense interest to *all*, will not be denied. That the traits of minds developed by it are of the most curious kind, is no less certain. As our Doctor seems to have had more than common intercourse with some of these, I thought his oral essays, however desultory, on such a topic, might be worth preservation. I therefore carefully noted down the remarks he made—and next morning made him *revise* his own speechifying. "If you ever publish," quoth he, "do make public my few experiences on this most momentous subject (*every* one's is of value, if they will but renounce theory for fact), that I may say *once*

for my life I have been, *possibly*, of more use to the world than this fat polypus."

As this may be the last (as well as first) opportunity, I—the Quaker—may ever have of a little chat with thee, my pensive (not crack-brained) Public! let me fulfil a little further the Rural Doctor's last wish and will, without a testament. Hence I hope that a little extension still, of this, our last (recorded) Night's dialogue, will be indulged, which I found not wholly unentertaining, apart from its awful interest. I shall still give it under the form of talk, suppressing my own (non-professional) interjected remarks.

Whether Madness be a disease of our animal or intellectual nature, is a question interesting deeply all human beings. It seems to me that the tide of prejudice (we never shall attain demonstration) sets too strongly now toward the physical origin of it. I have no doubt but that both species exist.

Good God! what terrible *onslaughts* have I seen made on this veiled malady, in the deep dark of our ignorance of mental machinery, with all the boldness of broad daylight, with that little fatal spear, the Lancet! aye, both in England and Wales. Even in the hand of a thinking man, it is a real *sword*, it carries the *power* of death at least—but in that of an ass!—zounds!

it becomes as the jaw-bone of his species in Sampson's ! Now much of this headlong rashness arises from the too constantly urged hypothesis, assumed as *fact*, that the body is *always* the intermediate cause of insanity. "Strike at the root" is a just injunction ; but be pleased to be *sure* first, that you *find* the root, and don't mistake the whole tree's root for the mere stem of the rotten branch you would extirpate. Though *Morgagni* long ago detected some change in the structures of the brains of mad people, as did *Meckel*, also *Penil*, and our *Haslam*, and the Italian physiologist, *Chiaruggi*, might not much of such alteration have been the *effect* rather than the *cause*—effects of raving agitations, of the altered diet and utterly new lives led by the insane, through years ? I have myself seen many mad, whose bodily healths were quite unaffected. If minds can be affected in one mode, without derangement of body, they may in another—if they can be made wretched or fantastic, they may be also made mad. Of such *eccentric* not *erring* states of mind, I hold myself an example. Though it were absurd, feeling, as I do, perfect serene exercise of the thinking faculty, to call myself an example of madness, yet I think the singularities of mine equally valid as Madness,

for my argument against the *constant* physical origin of that disease.

Now, *with* these, coeval with my memory—I have enjoyed *perfect* health. I once *caught* a slight typhus fever, my life's only ailment. Medicine I never took in my life, except a *little* then.

No time-piece ever went more steadily than my bodily machinery, few more irregularly than my mental—the only point is, that still it went *true*—I mean I had never any delusion.

The mind's *resistless* fixing of *itself* on objects of thought, when I was younger, has caused me great sufferings, not to be enlarged on here. I may say, however, that even now, I now and then lose the power of swallowing, merely through the intense fixing of my thought on the *act* of deglutition; and have gone to bed thirsty after repeated experiment and choking, which I knew to merely arise from my mind seizing on the muscular action, for its attention, in spite of me. Doubtless I should not have passed through the old ordeal of swallowing bread, without death! This is but one among numbers of such plagues of my *earlier* years.

The coming to spots in the country, long unvisited, where I had been happy and young, (even while still young, but with gnawing thoughts,) had something in it of such mixed

extremes of mournful pleasure, and of pleasing yet miserable pains, that I stood suddenly wishful to die, in the brightest day and season; and have rolled my eyes over meadows and flowery banks, and green lanes, by the dismal hour. I felt as if looking at a beautiful corpse. Equally allied to the terrible of pathos, was many a very common melody ground on a common organ, a little distant. I say *was*. Years and reverses, and above all, *actual advancing* death, (the lot of years) bring a sort of cure for those young-day ailments, as utter dark swallows up the fancy-fraught dusk, or the death-pang—*all* pangs. If one shrunk then from the war of Life, as feeling too feeble for it, the same cowardice throws ceaseless horror round the act of limping off the field. Certain changes of weather (always influential over me) *now* become for the time my fate's arbiters. What was listless uneasiness is *now* a total prostration of all powers, almost the locomotive. Wind, with *cold* foggy rains, drives me to bed, under a sort of despair, to sleep it out. And though I do, from past experience, *hope* a restoration to some vigour of mind, and appetite for exertion, I cannot conceive *how* it is to be wrought. Yet a blue morning, or soft sylvan solitude does, as yet—work that miracle. Will they always? Happy if we could

depart in one of those black disfigurations of the landscape, (as quietly as a bird of passage is gone from our wild winter's advent, and stripped woods, we know not when, but gone!)—if to balmier climates happier still—if but so hoping—still happy!

Now the result of all this is, that I conceive madness (*erring* conceptions) may be as justly believed to arise, without bodily source—as all my nervous vagaries—for what are these but mental emotions? How can any man distrust his health of liver, who eats every thing edible—oily, fat, acid, or what not—without a qualm, a twinge, or a headache?

Whatever mischief may have arisen from treating Insanity as wholly a moral affection, more I fear has followed the physical theory.

I went with a friend I was visiting when just from the hospital, to a patient of his, a miller's son, in Nottinghamshire, who had (he told me) brain-fever (*Phrenitis*, Inflammation of the Brain). A young hearty man, with dark-red flush in the face, was got out of bed to be bled again, having been bled *copiously*, already, in vain, as well as leeches. There was a sort of horror, and startling quickness, in his manner, that always seems to me distinct from the vague rages of the mad, whether phrenitic or chronic, and always to mark *depres-*

sion of nervous power. He burst through all their holds suddenly, ran out, and very nearly into the mill-river pool. He shrieked frightfully at sight of the preparation for bleeding. My friend was a sensible man, but too busy to think deeply. Being annoyed by the delay, and under other urgent calls, he left me to finish the business, at my discretion.

Thus empowered, and finding a rapid, excited, not *very* hard pulse, I had him got to bed, with all his "blood in the head" still *in*, got down a large dose of laudanum and cordial, besides a glass of wine. Exhausted seemingly (for he had been very outrageous) he fell asleep. Two stout young millers, and his father, and I, all waited expecting the wild burst of his refreshed waking. He woke with a tranquil sighing, and his tones were as low as a woman's, and senses quite collected—a total calm, and restoration!

I left a dose to be taken, if he grew wild again, which he did in the course of some hours after. It had the same soporific and becalming effect, and he quite recovered. It was with a strong feeling that I some months after learned that this young man, after a fatiguing journey on foot, to a relative at a distance, had been again taken ill as before, and died "rav-

ing mad." I cannot assert on knowledge, that the bleeding system was pursued, not being informed what course was adopted; but there can be no doubt, from the terms "brain fever," and "raving mad," used in the announcement, that it *was*—conformably to the constant practice. The anxiety of constant dread, the fever of horror under coercion in such *nervous* states, may well flush the face, give wildness to the eye, and hurry to the circulation, while the unhappy patient is all the while *needing* the energy residing in the vital fluid, instead of suffering from its excess.

The miller's son, I should have added, had performed that very journey homeward, before his first attack, drinking much cold water on the road.

I was present at the *post mortem* examination of the brain of a fine young woman who had died (it was said) of inflamed brain, having been bled profusely. A practitioner of some country note, a physician, had even predicted the precise appearances, the red spots, the turgescient veins, &c. which would—*must!* be found in the *dura mater*, &c. For curiosity only, I accepted a friend's invitation to witness the fulfilment of this *ante mortem* prophecy. Behold! never did vessels exhibit more of flaccid emptiness, never

brain more free from inflammatory signs. I'm ashamed to say that certain red points, which I never saw the meninges of a brain without, served to save the prophet's honour, "in his own country," and the poor young lady was duly "reported" as exhibiting a "highly inflamed brain!!" I being a novice, lately from school, moreover only a looker-on (alas! I have been one all my days), had nothing to do, but think—and marvel.

My dear brethren—ancient British, in *particular*—have mercy in the exercise of that terrible little sword of yours, when you're in the dark. But the mischief of it is, you never will believe, at least confess, that you *are* in the dark. You *must* bleed in many cases, I know but never take even *raging* loss of intellect, *alone*, for a justification.

I have been an observer of many Monomaniacs. What can be more curious than the phenomenon of a mind, at fault on one solitary track of the ideas? But there are aberrations as complete as mania, which occur, without even danger of it, temporary yet great; gone in a few hours, or the next hour; mostly in women, and those of delicate nerves and rather feeble powers of mind, at least of judgment and reflection. These cases are most important, as

demonstrating how great disturbance of the mind's functions may arise from how very slight a cause! one vanishing of its own accord (*usually under a cordial*). I'm astonished how little attention the faculty pay to these curious cases.

A woman of this character shall become impressed with some conviction, such as a reasoning process never could have built up in her mind, or some one which, though barely possible *at first*, a reasoning process must have, *after a time*, overthrown—yet she goes on, under its full torment, as if evidence, or as if that time, did not make it absurd and incredible. It seems that such persons, never having had the *habit* of submitting their ideas, as they rise, to the reasoning faculty, to *test* their nature, rest content with rejecting only *palpable* errors, as that the sun shines by night, and the like, taking many, a little more abstract, *on trust*. But some violent emotion, such as fear, attending some such error, they leap to a conclusion at once, as it is in the nature of violent emotion to do—the previous *imperfect* mental examination and report is *now wholly* foregone—no process instituted—the solitary Terror takes its seat and its stronghold. Reason can give no account of its dreadful entrance,

nor Science any prediction of its probable stay—whether it brings with it death, or only great misery and revolution of the whole inner being. One might liken such sudden idea, found seated in its startling awfulness and its melancholy mystery, in the most sacred recess of the temple of Reason, to Coriolanus found muffled and dumb in the sanctuary of the astonished Volscian—*this*, alas! no reconciled enemy.

Those who believe (what I confess *I* do not) that brutes who *seem* to act by reasoning, do *not*, but only by an impulse called Instinct, which so much resembles the result of trains of reflection, might almost dare to deem Monomania, a wonderful *partial* lapse of our Intellectual, into the lower rank of the Instinctive state of being. I have myself been told by a person—“*I know that I have no ground whatever for the belief—on the contrary, even every ground for disbelief!* Yet I can’t help it, I’m convinced it *is* so:” and distracted letters, and the utmost distress, proved that conviction to be thus rooted. Yet was such party without a symptom of even *Monomania*!

A clever watchmaker, the most scientific in Paris, during the Revolution, insisted that his own head was *not* his own, but one of another victim joined to *his* neck after his suffering the

guillotine ! To divert him from this, the hope of finding the perpetual motion was insinuated to him—he followed the idea, and invented the most curious and most appropriate machines *towards* his grand object—all the while unshaken in his estrangement from, and horror of his uncongenital head, thus come ghastly and bloodless, to revive with *his* blood, and act with its stranger-brain upon *his* life's course ! This is unquestionable, the authority being M. Pinel, of the Bicêtre, in Paris, who attended to his case, and records it in his “*Traite sur l'Alienation Mentale en la Manie.*”

A young lady of Frankfort, after puerperal fever consequent on her first child-birth, had all remembrance of her marriage and her confinement utterly rased from her mind*—she screamed at the touch of her child at her bosom, blushed at all familiar address of her husband, whom she yet perfectly knew and very much loved (they having been long kept apart by relations), but *he* was still the *lover*—she the coy yet kind beloved one. She retained in the midst of sanity this strange and rather whimsical idea, and only *permitted* the child as a wet-nurse, and consented to *think* herself a wife, at

* Villers, sur une Nouvelle Théorie du Cerveau.

the urgent entreaty of all her friends. But how a child came into her house, or her lover became her husband, she never could conceive—puzzled over, and wept over the mystery to her bosom-friend! Meanwhile, she was not deemed insane nor treated as such.

A *robust young* farmer fell three several times, through a moderate bleeding at the arm, into a deep melancholy, and hypochondria, that lasted for months.

A young lady totally forgot (after an illness with delirium) one language she had known before, but remembered another foreign one as well as ever. (What freak of *your one* organ of Memory was *that*, Doctor Gall?)

I never heard a more tragical domestic incident than one I was told of when in Nottinghamshire (in 1814, I believe). A young and beautiful Derbyshire girl was married to an honest miner, somewhere in the Peak. He was her first love, *not* her first sweetheart. About the end of five *important* months her rejected suitor, a dissolute drunken Lothario of the lead mines, seized an opportunity afforded by her lonely residence up one of the mineral hill-sides, to revenge himself for his rejection. The unhappy girl could not endure, as it seemed, to risk the alteration of her husband's feel-

ings toward her; at least, she buried the secret even from a sister. But her whole demeanour was so altered, that the husband, before kind, grew cruel under her detected tears and obstinate silence, and probably his own jealousy too. At last he grossly ill-used her, and deserted her and home for the ale-house; and yet the poor ill-judging creature preserved her secret, and suffered with the patience of a martyr.

But the fatal issue was when she became a mother. The medical man who told me the story attended her, and she had no fever, but nothing could overcome her horror of her own (and palpably *husband's*) child. This aversion was the sole symptom of any mental ail, and not a soul guessed the cause. Her husband, tired out with this new distress and the old together, probably hating her heartily now (for her very love's anxiety to keep his!) went off to some other lead country, or to enlist. At least he was not come back at two years' end, and it was reported he had deserted after enlisting, and was transported (for frame-breaking), under his new regimental name. The unhappy forsaken wife, after attempting the life of the infant, was restrained, as believed insane in charity, but contrived to escape and drown herself.

My informant never heard that the monster who caused this tragedy was punished : but he had fled, and indeed it was only by the poor sufferer's talk after her delusion (as to the paternity of her offspring) to some work-house women, by many recollected things put together, and the flight of the ruffian, that this solution of the mystery of her unnatural feeling and her despair was obtained. Her health was undisturbed through the whole, quite to the catastrophe, and her attempt on the child the sole insane act. *Did* her error amount to madness ? And would she have merited and received death, had her attempt succeeded ? * These are curious, dreadful questions !

* It is curious to reflect how many of our existing laws absolutely *cry* for reform, while the clamour for vague indefinite Reform drowns the cry. The law which requires of modest females *publica viri voce* evidence in open Court, under certain cases of injury, seems of this kind. By the curious laws of Howell Dda, the Cambro-British Solon, the lady under a certain wrong was required to retain hold of a *bull* by its tail, thrust through a door ajar, and *if* she held it, she had the beast for her pains as a compensation for her wrong !! *We* laugh at this—but is not *our* ordeal by which *alone* a woman can obtain justice, a still more stupid, cruel, and self-defeating species of mock justice ? A wanton, bold, intriguing, perjured woman, who desires to cover her own disgrace by sacrificing a paramour, has a very good chance of success in her worthy object—a timid, nervous, innocent woman, very small chance indeed. A poor creature with senses already reeling under her

The last hallucination I will name arose out of a circumstance to a certain extent resembling the last. An incident occurred to a married female, mother of a family, (during a protracted absence of her husband) which caused in her mind a dread amounting to horror, either from her own repugnance, or her acute feeling for the pain and horror which the anticipated misery must inflict on a husband—or both combined.

But I will confine myself to a few points only of this case, which produced a state exceeding madness in its misery. Those who duly appreciate Shakespeare and his school, as *philosophers*, not poets only, will not think me unfeel-

abominable task of lifting up her face, her voice, to a crowd of strange men (one or more bound to falsify her innocence if possible), and talk as she could hardly be induced to talk to a husband or father—I say such a woman may be most easily *quite* overset by an impudent brow-beating Counsel, and perhaps made to appear even perjured as well as guilty, instead of innocent. That the terrors of this species of redress must, and do often cause the escape of a criminal, cannot be doubted—but it does worse, it incites to crime. Doubtless, there are wretches unmanly enough to wish to make a *victim*, of one they despair to make a partner in guilt, as in the dreadful case above related by the late Mr. Jenkinson, Surgeon, Sutton Ashfield (long since dead). And is it not likely that such men would calculate *before hand*, on the chances of escaping condign punishment, afforded by the timid or easily

ing in adverting to poetry here, or even at the moment of witnessing extreme distress and dilaceration of feelings. I allude to his Dagger Scene in Macbeth. Dr. Ferriar's cases of ocular spectra, and those of other recent writers, have already verified the great poet's truth to pathological nature; but so perfect an illustration never before occurred to my own view, as in this case, of the full power of over-wrought imagination to produce an actual *image* of a non-existent object, to contend with reason and establish itself in despite of reason. A strange sort of somnambulism affected the last-mentioned sufferer, who would talk incessantly almost through the night, as in rational regular

shaken nerves of a female? Having that case as evidence of *one* vile criminal wholly escaping his deserts (at least as far as I ever heard), and happening myself to know of another now at large (whose guilt was self-proved by the hour and place of his attempt, which one who might have chosen his own, of course never could have selected) another *at large* wholly through the disinterested advice of friends, actuated by feeling of the *horror* of the steps indispensable to attaining justice I have been led into these reflections, perhaps out of place here. What shall be said of that *Irish* species of English law, which, instead of deterring offenders by its terrors for *them*, *screens* them by its revolting terrors for the sufferers; deterring *them* from seeking justice? Is it not more than probable that that young wife (the miner's bride) would *not* have suffered misery, madness, and death, had she known

dialogue with some one, whose words she kept answering, mostly on the topic of a trying part which justice to herself and others seemed to impose on her as a duty.

It was after spending a night thus till past three o'clock, that, on waking from a short slumber, she seemed to connect with some dream her child three or four years old, and pushed it from bed with frightful violence, happily obviated by a person's receiving it as it fell. This seemed entirely the confusion of half broken sleep; but the false character which the poor child lying close to her assumed, under that state, it retained *for hours*, under her fully aroused state by strong candlelight, as well as dawn light, long after her return to per-

that a *sworn respectable body of matrons* would be open to her complaints, whose *verdict* would have also (as far as nature would permit) prevented her husband's estrangement? And is it not monstrous that a ruffian, (of whatever sphere,) without the excuse of youth, or inebriety, or connivance—whose act would at least expel him from the country, should escape wholly through the very deepness of his crime's dye?—that its nature should almost *force* the injured party or parties, into a silence?—he defying the pursuit of justice, like that beast which, when pursued, surrounds himself with so pestilent an atmosphere, that he saves his life or *his liberty*, such is the revolting task of seizing him? Here is one ground of fair application for *Legislative* reform, I conceive.

fect waking *sanity*. In fact, except that sleepless excitement which I perhaps wrongly called somnambulism, she had not a trait of aberrant mind. As often as this child, of the age mentioned—capable of speech, and of course unlike as need be to a *new-born* infant, was attempted to be laid again to rest by her, her horror was excessive, she exclaiming, “Dress it, dress it! take care of it; but for God’s sake don’t shew it me—Take it away—I can’t nurse it,” &c. The light being brought close to shew the familiar face, neither added to, nor removed the impression—but the little girl’s crying increased it dreadfully. A figure, an image, was evidently present to her mind’s eye, which disguised the familiar one of that child.

It was on her closing her eyes to go to rest, as persuaded, that this image seemed to vanish; for *then*, first her eyes purposely shut, she addressed the child in the usual way, remarking on its being so disturbed, and desiring to have it laid by her again; nor was she again agitated, when after sleep she saw it so lying. It was not that she even before *mistook* its real age or identity; for when she was told, “*This is ———,*” naming it, she said with some anger, “I am *not mad!*—I *know* her very well, but I

see the other”—and she relapsed into a wild agitation and trembling. I cannot account for the closed eyes making a difference. I think this case very clearly marked a real figure or phantom, painted (as it were) on the *brain*, without the intervention of the senses.

Passing from this topic, we talked about the affinity between Genius and Madness, hinted by Dryden. The Doctor will have it that Genius is a certain conformation of Mind, which no more implies a praiseworthy than wicked *future* on earth—therefore merits no more honour, *per se*, than red hair or black, which may just hint at character, no more. That Shakespeare's *plays* are glorious, but the *man* Shakespeare not a whit more than if he had died a wool-comber; that he would probably have lived and died a deer-stalker, and rustic rogue or ruffian, had he not happened to turn link-boy among wits of the Theatre. He holds that his *production* is the all in all, the *man* nothing—and if he, the Doctor, could pant still for *Fame*, it would be for fame to be attached to his Book, not to *him*, the writer. Finally, he broke forth into one of his wild flights of oratory on

THE MAD!

“What a volume of terrible pathos is con-

densed in that word! Success and failure, hope and fear, shame and glory—even night and day, are to the Mad—no more! In the scale of sentient existences they are gone down, down, down—below the brute—back beyond Infancy! Babes and brutes are perfect creations of God's hand—these are ruins. They are the lingering yellow leaves on the great tree of Life, dead yet not fallen. Alas for the innocent Mad, doomed to the bitterest lot of the most guilty, to become a horror to their friends, and to be wished dead by their dearest! What rational mourner shall we find by a madman's grave? Who so weakly fond as to mourn for the animal life's close, when the mental has already come to an end? Bitter destiny! Without a fault on our part, to estrange those who loved us even to the desiring our deaths! To be utterly rased from among pleasant and gentle, and respectful thoughts, in their minds, and classed with the most hideous! to become loathsome where we would be loved—revolting where we were attractive—frightful, foul, dismal, horrible!

“Yet let us ruminate a little on this first hideous view of the matter. And first, ‘What is madness?’ Who shall answer that question? Only God, and possibly the souls of the Mad, *restored* to them, as we may say, in heaven.

The Maniac in his dismal second birth walks like a magician his lone enchanted circle, where 'none may walk but he.' We pry, we listen, we wonder, on the outside—we hear a human howling come from out of that dark—often laughter—wild converse with things unknown to Reason—ghosts, chimæras, angels—no more. To the sufferer nature forbids his disclosing the secret of his prison house; and the sane, ere they can enter, must become even as he, and therefore incommunicable as he. It is not a mere wild trance and ceaseless dreaming in which they live. How they muse! how they smile to themselves! how connect their own inward experiences, and draw conclusions, and establish themselves, as it were, in their new world of shadows, and grow intimate with apparitions, making whole Life a Vision!

And after all, is not this all-dreaded state but a mercy in excess? To be forgetful of evils past, fearless of those to come, is surely a high dispensation of merciful Providence. *Partial* oblivion—*partial* blindness to the future,—is to man here, what the cloud interposed by the goddess in Homer, was to her overmatched hero. Without *this* vouchsafed by our mighty Mother, who could bear Memory of the Past, who dare the gorgon terror of the Future?

“Look then, at the glorious privileges of these *passive* heroes, we just now pitied and despised! As the newborn or the unborn child defies all fortunes, and weathers all fate’s storms, unmoved beyond the boldest hero, so is it with them!

“Thrones fall—others rise on their ruins—Empires and cities are overthrown, overrun, consumed—what are these mortal ruins to them? What armies, earthquakes, sword, fire? They pick pebbles or field-flowers while their native town is bombarded. Is a breach made? They keep *their* old place in the sun, still, beneath the tottering remains of wall. The noisome volumed smoke of artillery is but to them a cloud come over the blue vault, or a black evening. When the town is at last taken by storm—the enemy entering pell-mell—bells ringing alarms, trumpets sounding, cries for quarter yelled in vain, women tearing their hair, children bleeding at their breasts, houses blazing, combustibles spouting fire, walls thundering down before the point-blank range of cannon, shells bursting, friends killing friends in the dark and the desperation of the time, and whole streets running blood—what do the Mad? Perhaps they clap their hands at the sport—perhaps stick another flower in their

fluttering rags, calm as ever, and even when a bullet or the sword re-unites these ‘chartered libertines’ to the lot of Humanity which they thus have escaped—even *then* they triumph! Death—King of Terrors as he is—has not a terror for *them*! They meet him with a smile—his least infliction, the single pang that ends all pains, is all *they* have to meet, and with the obtuse body only do they meet it, not the quivering mind. All that Philosophy teaches, all that the Stoics affected, *they* have acquired, *they* have attained to!—for *them*, and them only, it is, to exclaim ‘Oh Death! where is thy sting?’ for those thrice-panoplied philosophers, with their inward shield for heart and brain—the Mad!

“Oh, gifted and privileged being, why do we grieve over you? Over *you*, from whose eyes, even while yet in this vale of tears, ‘the Lord God has wiped all tears for ever?’ For you, even in this life, Sin and Death are no more; for you there is no more falling, for your soul is released from its responsibility; there is no more one attribute of Death that constitutes dying an evil; no looking-for of the pains of dying day, or dangers of Doomsday,—no farewells—no tearings away from children, no orphan-making, no widow-making!—all those to you *have*

been without your knowledge. On your dying-day of *Mind* *they* were—and then too was your Judgment-day, your accompt made up, and the world at an end to you, as a being with a soul.

“ You have *yet* to die ; but dying, which is extinction to other minds, is the re-illuminating of your’s—that heavy sleep to them is your awaking from dreams to truth, from dark to light. The Past obliterated, the Future blank, the Present a sleep, you walk the earth, already denizens of beatitude or ill. Man and you parted on the black evening of Reason’s setting, and you, terrestrial spirits ! have ever since belonged only to God and his Eternity.”

END OF THE TENTH NIGHT.

CONCLUSION.

THE DOCTOR "AT HOME!"

WELL, Reader! you are at *your* journey's end, and I at mine—you gaping for weariness, I for leek-broth prepared for the most homesick and fatigued of husbands, by the most home-keeping and indefatigable of wives! I am "Arrived," and safe; in the finest state of preservation. My "many friends" are ready to eat me; and I to eat every thing! Fine air! For let me tell you, although I have attained a physician's age "to get bread," I have not lost my teeth to eat it with. No! So don't make that an excuse for withholding it, my dear patients! The whole world hardly affords a more affecting spectacle than that of a darling Doctor come back into the bosom of —his practice and family.

His old friends (so kind, that they welcome *his* oral advice, though shy of the lawyer's) crowd round him with the dear old questions, all poised upon the identical *pegs* he left them standing on—no vile interloping ones of cork

or wood, startling his jealous eye, thrust on to their dear stumps, by any yet viler interloping strange "doctor" (*Rural* or other); no "foreigner," English or French, or other, having dared meddle with one scull there, by trepan, (to trepan their future custom); no metallic plate substituted for an "organ," but every *bump* there, which he left (unless a fair hath been holden lately); in short all "*in statibus quibus.*" (I love to meddle with *Cases* of *all* sorts; it shews learning!) Meanwhile, he gazes affected almost to tears of joy on those limbs, "every inch" flesh! all warm Welsh blood and flesh! entire still, not without a thought of his new set (new-set) of amputating and trepanning instruments—skull-pincers, &c., that he hath brought down yet "unfleshed" in their virgin polish, and on—*what they cost*. Hoping the best, he smiling walks among them all, like a husbandman with his sickle among the corn ripening for the exercise of it.

All this and more also I have experienced—I stroll to the church-yard stile, and even *there* too I am "At Home." I am "alone with my dead!" I have been dreadfully wanted in my winter's absence! Reform itself never more wanted! Yet do my dear sick, who put off sending for me (though desperately ill) for

two or three months, look as smiling at me!—and no wonder—they live: and they have saved their money. Yet I *know*, by many hard looks at me, that, though luckily not a life, or limb, or patient has been lost, I *shall* be wanted presently. In fact, I have had several offering to suck at my replenished brain, my “London House” knowledge-box (bah!) *bazaar*—already. For, had my brain as many teats as a sow with a farrow of fifteen to the dozen, I could not properly wet-nurse the brood of patients I have been used to enjoy, of this class! But “*tempora mutantur et Nos*”——enough. Henceforth I deal in only “golden opinions.”

I have not furnished and furbished my *caput rivum* for nothing. I have laid in an assortment of the most recent fashions of London Science, ready for the ensuing inclemency of the summer that is at hand, and all Breakneckshire may defy all its bitterness, if they but have *my* help *in time*. The last Infallible of orthodox Physic (for like the last Immortal in the authorship of “To-Day,” there is always a wondrous remedy of “to-day”) is ready for use, like the last pattern of a gown. I walk my town, (having roofed my bazaar, thus

crammed, with a bran new wig and the ladies (God bless them, I never remember how these villanous Hours are running away with me, while I am in the company of those terrestrial *Houris* !) the ladies, I say—have said, as I am confidently told—that my very eyes display the “stock within !” shining on each side of my *os Frontis*, like plate-glass shop-windows on each side of a front door : not lacking brass—(nor *railing*, I can tell any body who chuses to try my *metal*.) I was always a lucky man. Lucky in my operations—lucky in my confinements (accoucheur-ments I mean), lucky in my loves ! I have told you how I have found “all well” at home, here writing, “shut up in measureless content” and immeasurable mountains ; in fine health and stupidity, all learning, love, and lassitude ! Well ! I have left state affairs *more* than well behind too. I have watched by the poor dear Constitution till I have almost ruined my own. Now having seen it duly defunct, in professional course—here I am, dear reader (and *patient* let me add) to take care of your’s !

As to my Country, I never read or heard of a finer state of convalescence in my life, than it is now enjoying. Trade improves—(strange if manufactures did not, when every lady is a

walking warehouse of manufactured goods)—Reform progresses—our very State is reformed, admitting a Fourth—the “Tail.” The “H——born Ministry,” like Phaeton, has made good its paternity: such patronage as it enjoys would “cover with (a blaze of) glory” any world or nation.

I’ve been an odd reader in my time. I once read somewhere how the Rabbins believe Gog or Magog to have been contemporary with Noah. Gog denounced Noah, and Noah Gog, lustily—till the *Flood* came. Then Gog became ‘*convinced*’ by the preaching of Noah, and behold! a holy alliance! Gog bestrode the Ark, and rode tilting over the waves of the drowning world; the vessel, with “all its unclean things,” for his seat, and they no doubt peeping out with their small sinister faces through the loopholes, frightened enough, between his huge legs. What became of this huge beast of a Palinurus I forget, but I think he did not steer for Mount Ararat.

Now I recollected this story when I was in London, and saw in the Irish Magog, and his mewed-up crew, a very apt illustration of this Judaical legend. (I recommend it to H.B.’s notice for his next admirable Caricature.) Can

I wish better protection for my Country than *this*, or doubt our being all saved?

But having thus left and found "all well," I had nearly forgot what I had to say, *again*, to you, my reader. It was to tell you how I sped with the poor defunct Quaker's MSS.—I had some grounds, from opinions of others more competent to judge, to believe there was "power"—"original power"—"first-rate powers"—"genius"—"great force of thought and feeling"—"an air of greatness and enthusiasm"—"great command of figurative language" in some of his collection; for in *these terms* had they been written of by divers judicious Critics." Now I, in my old notions, had been fancying that *Genius* had to do with *success*, in authorship. Success I *knew* had to do with the *pence*—and oh! dear departed "Neighbour" Oswald—in Heaven!—how contented were I humbly to merely *receive* them (like an O'Connell rent, and as disinterestedly) to *your* honour and glory, for multiplied editions!—How happy to be the mere obscure medium that they should feed my *mortal* part *en passant* only, on their way to rejoice your *immortal*, as a river feeds the fields it passes, but goes to form Sea—ah! happy I to be but that fatted field—and nothing more—you one of those

famous dead who never die—in that heaven of fame, where that troublesome *feeding* business, is no more !

“ ‘Sdeath ! I’ll print it ! ” No sooner thought than done !—The Lord help me ! I soon found that though a “big wig” and prophet in my own country, I was but a babe and suckling in the Literary world of this “Augustan Age !” —“It’s *all* chance, Sir,” said Mr. — of a great publishing house—himself a literary man ; “A *thing* may have the highest merit, but how will you *make* the public read it ? ” —“What ! ” I cried—“*how* ? Will not *Merit*, *Genius* make it read, if it *is* so intellectual a public ? ”

Be it known to the Reader, that I can *feel*, although a doctor and a truculent one ; hence, I fell into a reverie while he looked at a proof sheet he was correcting.

“Should I call this a barbarous age,” thought I, “how insolent, how foolish should I be deemed. Were I in *Kamschatka*, and should present to the natives a work of genius—(say Milton or Homer at once) not smelling of train oil or blubber, they would toss it me back, f not spit on it, (as did the sea by the leaves of writing which the pseudo-rural Doctor in this book allegorically described his phantom-fellow traveller to have strewed on the waves). Possibly

should I stick pictures all about it, they would gape at it, for *their* sake, a little while. And all this would be no more than natural, for I knew them to be a barbaric and blubber-loving public."

"Yes—I'll assure you," interjected Mr. — still poring over his sheet, "it's all the chance of *hitting* the humour of the time."

"I thought," grumbled I, "still equally absorbed in *my* brown study; "I thought *Genius* was to consult *Nature*—Genius is fostered in retirement—how shall *it* hit humours and the hour's mood? I thought fancy-Opera-wenches and fancy-murderers, like Jack Thurtell that the mob uncovered to, were the folk to *hit* the humour of the multitude? But if," recogitated I, "a public long claiming to be most intellectual, boasting itself so high above that which enthroned Hayley and starved Chatterton, exhibit almost as gross a perversion of taste, it adds to the disgrace of such barbarous taste, the *crime* of a cruel injustice !

"It has been professing these thirty or forty years to be the manyheaded Patron of talent. It stands, in the place of a Chesterfield or a Walpole of the bygone age—to administer better justice. It has therefore been fostering a genera-

tion of aspirants on the faith of this *new* system, on the principle ‘*Palnam qui meruit ferat.*’ Is it *acting* up to this in lauding and loving mawkish mediocrity, wordy pomposity, racy hash-ups of a coarse style of Novel, defunct some sixty years, and only endured for the sake of the genius of its originators? An enthusiast-genius says—‘*Now* at least I shall be sure of a *trial*, not by a cold-hearted peer or bookseller, but by a refined ‘Public!’ I will go before this august tribunal, and cry—‘I have thrown my whole soul into Literary ambition!—I have lived loose to society—a hermit, though not of woods, for the cherishing my early impulse. I *fancy* myself teeming with lofty, passionate sublime emotions, such as you, oh patrons of genius! declare to constitute *Genius!* But I am alone, and full of doubts, and I know that thousands conceit of themselves what I do. To-day I respect myself, to-morrow despise—nay, start at myself for a wretched fool who has foregone all the joys of life for a dream of *one*, never to arrive—never merited. To name but one of those joys, the more constant company of my little children, before *their* days of play (and perhaps *mine* of peace) were gone and over—that one loss, I fear, would hardly be repaid even by *Fame*. However, here I am!

Deign to read, judge, determine! If I *am* a gifted man, late as is the hour with me—in justice, let my last of life be glorified, agreeably to your own theory! If I *am* that wretched fool, self-defrauded of Life's joys—turning to solitude from my children with many a heart-ache, often for the pure sake of meditations that were vanity—in mercy, *still* read, judge, and tell me so, that I may wake from my dream, know myself, shrink back into the 'poor and loathsome beggar' in mind, which I have (so long intoxicated by your flatteries of Genius) forgotten to 'esteem myself;' that, although too late, alas! to live now for the world and this life, I may live wholly to my family, to God, and perhaps the hope of a life to come, where Man's Fame and Obscurity are but as dreams of a feverish night past."

And what would be the result of this resolve, when the wild aspirant should come rushing with his *genius*, before that Augustan public? (like Abou Casem in the Eastern tale, rushing with his fatal slippers, that he *could not* rid himself of, before the Cadi.)

Let Mr. —— answer—"A work may be first-rate, it may have all the genius possible, but *how* will you *make* the Public read? It's *hitting* the humour—that's every thing."

“Why then,” thought I, “(were *I* that luckless wight, I would say, and say a thousand times)—‘Then you *are* a barbaric Public, and this *is* a barbaric Age!’”

A truce with all this! Here am I “at home!” Before I went to London I might have said, “Here am I Doctor *Fee*, Faw, Fum, up to every thing!” But that’s vulgar—“at home”’s the word. I am a bit of a Passion-painter too, myself. The best Tale here is *mine*. I flatter myself I am “at home” in the passions—I’m sure I am generally in passions, at home. I propose to operate at *Reform* prices. I am Ultra-Radical, Radical in religion, in politics, in stature. I go therefore to the root of every thing, from a cancer to a corn; from a new nose to a new “organ” (by trepanning I mean). I *graduate* my charges by a Reform scale. I am armed at all points—needle points—harelip pin points—epigram points—determined that Posterity shall say of me, “*Omne tulit punctum, et miscuit utile dulci*, (alluding to my rolling my pills in liquorice powder.) Farewell! But take a dropped Lyric, for its strange spirit, which has unaccountably been omitted in my collection of the dear Quaker’s Memorabilia. I think the writer must have been some doctor who could not ‘keep his carriage,’ or a madman.

A MISANTHROPE'S FAREWELL.

World ! I am alone !
 To the world unknown,
 I go without thy knowledge, thy censure, praise, or pity !
 From *thy* wolfish to its pale
 Meek People, in Death's vale,
 From thy cities ripe for Wrath, to the Ever-Silent City.

That the world unknown ?
 No—this in which I groan !
 This of which I've known but the pain, the guilt, the woe ;
 Thou the mystery malign,
 World of strangers, never mine !
 To my own dark Mother-Country's dearer solitude I go !

There, whate'er my fate,
 Lord ! I but await
 Thy will—(thy will be done !) not Man's, thy erring creature's ;
 With my God as best I can,
 I must deal, no more with Man,
 Proud freedman of all Law but everlasting Nature's !

This at least, I know,
 Of that world below,
 That *his* ill-omened visage will not whiten through its shade ;
 That pale plague in my path,
 Which long estrangement hath
 Hateful as mine own heart, and life, and lot, and all things made.

Love ! soft deceiver !
Thee will I curse never,
 Though thou said'st I should not die, as I'm dying now, alone ;
 Hope, Fame and Genius !
 Take ye my farewell curse,
 Ye who swore I should not die, as I'm dying now, unknown !

Ye alone could win me;
 Impulses were in me,
 To ecstasies of Passion, to prodigies of Glory;
 Love! thou cloistered Lust!
 Hope! thou lie accurst!
 Fame! thou tower of dust
 And ashes!—have I sighed to be *your* fool, *your* dupe, *your*
 story?

Come, Spirit yet unbroken,
 Come, lofty Thought unspoken,
 Come, Mind of vast abortions—lay these vain labours by;
 Come, Heart, that ne'er knew'st rest!
 From tossings in that breast,
 To a quieter death-bed—come all! 'tis time to die!

Our own sepulchres are we,
 When doomed no more to see—
 (A *mock*-sun, though it be)
 Hope's ever-blue Tomorrow, ever rising, never risen;
 Sick Thought is our wan shroud;
 Death's Doomsday thunder-cloud
 Hangs low,—but slow the bolt to batter down our prison!

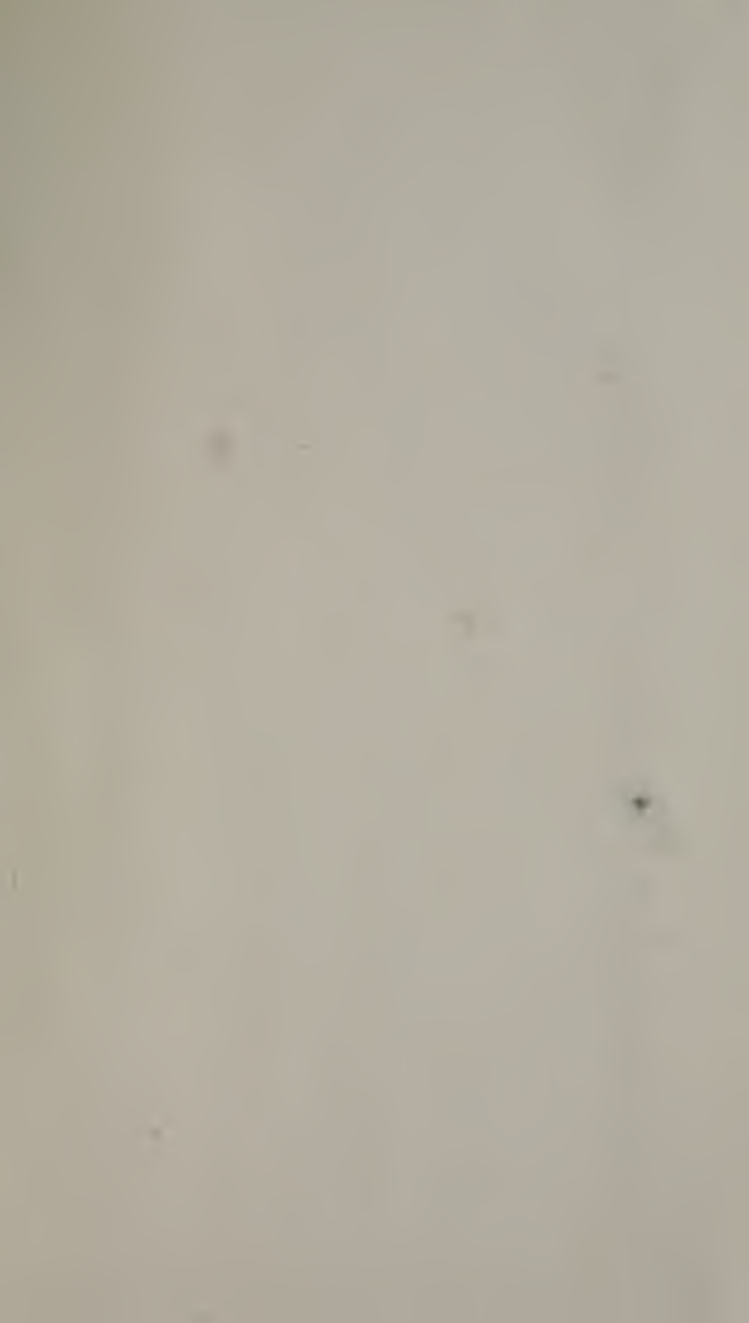
But *we* 'll imitate
 Sardanapalus's fate!
 This breast the burning palace,—the enemy—men all!
 The pale, pale flag, produce,
 Of defiance—not of truce!
 And plant on that proud Palace of the Passions' reeling wall!

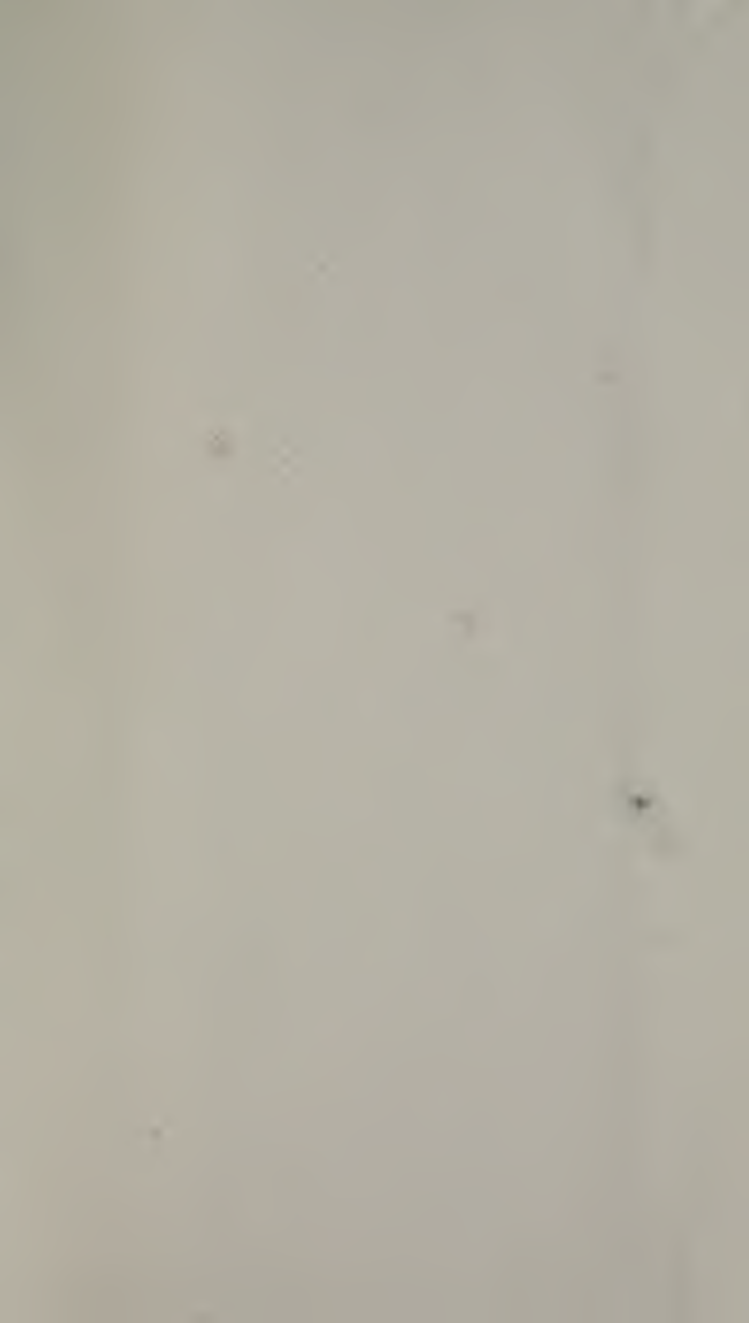
Oh, that this poor pen
 (Ne'er to be used again),
 A wish to Death's own dart could turn, to dip in this heart's
 gall,

And wing its poisoned rage,
Through all this loathsome Age,
And *I, I* stand the grinning Death to shake it over all !

Now I go alone,
To the World Unknown,
World ! without thy knowledge, disdainful of thy pity ;
From thy wolfish—to the pale
Meek millions in Death's vale,
From thy cities (which Wrath quick confound !) to the Ever-
Silent City.

END OF THE MOUNTAIN-DECAMERON.









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